THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE SILVER SHIP

WHAT manner of men were those lost with the Akron? This is the question which American citizens are asking, and well may ask, now that the huge silver ship which was the navy's pride is only a tangled mass of wreckage lost in the sea. If the blow involved no more than five million dollars worth of duraluminum and other materials, or if the sole concern were a possible loss to aeronautic science, we should none of us be greatly concerned. It is because one sees in this a test of the value of the human being, even in an era of machines, that one is moved by this tragedy as by a great lesson in life and morals.

The substance of Commander Wiley's terse comment on the disaster was: "The discipline in the control room was perfect." Here was a group of men who had been trained to meet a certain sort of emergency bravely, and who did not fail when the emergency came. We should like to present one of them in some detail. Lieutenant George C. Calnan was probably as well known to the public at large as any officer in the navy. The reason was his status as a fencing champion—an art he had developed so early that he won the national foils title at the age of twenty-four, and subsequently remained an Olympic star with a phenomenal list of victories to his credit. Because he was also a handsome, jovial, genial person, he made a host of friends everywhere.

But the public at large did not realize that Lieutenant Calnan was also cast in an heroic mold. He was a Boston Irish lad, and that he continued to remain. When he left his little home in Beechwood to join the Akron on its fatal trip, he put beside the chair in which he had been reading two documents: one a copy of a professional report on an air disaster strikingly similar to that in which he was to lose his life, the other a copy of a Catholic magazine. A non-Catholic friend who told us this story added that "it showed what Calnan did all his life, for he was interested in nothing so much as his religion and his profession." The same friend added that no hardship ever prevented the young lieutenant from attending Mass on Sunday, or from living up to every jot or tittle of the faith in him.

We believe there is reason for stressing these simple facts. The rhythm of life as interpreted in smart journals and spicy newspapers is belied here by a career the beauty of which is its own sufficient recommendation. Men and women who turn devotees of easy

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passion may belong in the newspapers, which gather photographs in Cannes and Reno, but they certainly do not belong in the control room of the Akron. That service of danger and honor, of courage and glory, came by something like right to birth to those who, like the Lieutenant we are honoring, know that the genuine soul must ring true as the coin which a banker tests by dropping it on the table. Deaths like his are not tragedies. They are merely seals placed upon verities deeper than experience or longing, which we may sometimes ignore but upon which none the less everything that we are as a society or a nation rests. Therefore one need not think first of all of the dizzy lurching of an air-vessel huger than the most fantastic imagined Leviathan, nor of the crash of steel and bodies against the relentless water, but of the will to face these things and, beyond them, the adventure of immortality.

It is wise not to put faith in the judgment of war. A curse rests upon every modern people which in this age of machines gambles for power with the lives of its young men and even of its women and children. Nevertheless those traditions which thousands of years of abiding by the soldier's code have developed are especially indispensable today. What does the "waning of confidence" so noticeable on every hand really mean? Only this—that in a thousand control rooms, in a thousand centers where the fortunes of the community were being decided, there was no "perfect order."

During many years, the failure was increasingly visible. The ship of state lurched dizzily in mid-air, in spite of calm weather; the cargoes of finance and trade had been put in boats the pilots of which were asleep and the captains of which were playing poker. But people professed not to see because in their hearts they had repudiated honor. They themselves wanted the easy life, with a private right to smile at loose moral standards and to pat themselves on the back for repudiating the intelligence of man. Today the wrecks are obvious. Social structures beside which the Akron was a toy have collapsed, burying hundreds of thousands who had a naive faith in their eternity.

The change will come, and then only, when there is general recognition of a collective American failure. In the case of the Akron, some investigating commission may ultimately discover a flaw in the construction of the ship, or reveal a mistake in navigation. In the case of our banks and our businesses, our government and our machinery for the education of public opinion, probing may unearth technical faults or bad leadership. But we shall be perilously mistaken if as individuals we let the matter rest there. The real task is to cleanse the consciences of the majority, and to unearth the causes of the decline of character which remains the greatest phenomenon of a whole generation.

From the Christian point of view, this task suggests itself. Here lies, we take it, the true meaning of the Holy Year: to restore confidence in man by reawakening mankind's confidence in God.

WEEK BY WEEK

ATTENTION was again riveted during the past week upon the international situation. Perhaps the most important single event was Mr. Roosevelt's action in inducing the British Prime Minister to visit the United States for "practical" discussion of the great issues now pending. The news has it that French, Italian, German and Japanese spokesmen are to be invited later on. This seems to foreshadow energetic participation by the government of the United States in the work to be done if economic and political clouds are to be lifted in a measure from the world at large. We welcome the step particularly, however, because it seems to imply an effort to wean public opinion from the ill-informed, sentimental and indifferent attitude it takes toward issues which, regardless of their international scope, affect the life and fortune of every individual citizen. Apart from that (and of course from beer, to which we pay our respects below) it has been a pretty dreary week. The German situation is more obscure and impenetrable than before, and the tension between Paris and Rome seems if anything greater than it was. Domestic politics have waited upon the routine work to be done upon major relief and reconstruction bills.

As Things Go

BEER—well, after all it is the same old beer and very refreshing. As the summer advances, our appreciation no doubt will be more and more. Together with the rest of the anti-prohibitionist (and pro-temperance and a sensible enjoyment of this world's goods) people, we watched the coming of the seventh day of April with some apprehension. We dreaded, as it is said the professional drys hoped, that there might be a flare-up of orgiastic beer drinking that would hurt the cause of temperance. We proceeded soberly enough ourselves and our enjoyment was none the less keen. Some of our young friends ran around and drank six or seven bottles of the new brew. They reported a feeling of distention but no "kick." A little gentle questioning brought out the fact that they, poor children of an arid, too material time, had fallen into the reprehensible prohibition period practice of taking gin much as a drug addict takes a hypodermic injection in the arm. The gentler pleasances of drinking at a dinner table where intelligent company gathered, or in a garden where music or a little wind in trees went overhead toward the stars in the night sky, or in short any of the amiable, relaxed practices of the amenity as enjoyed by civilized peoples throughout the globe, were unfamiliar to them. Used to raw, harsh spirits taken defiantly, they wanted that flight from reality effect liquor can give. We explained how beer and cheese, or other of the excellent things that go well with it, should be enjoyed with the

Beer

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full possession of the intelligence. They tried this and we have seen cheerfulness dawn in their faces, a healthy cheerfulness that will have no bitter morning-after. Beer, we believe, will have served as an admirable introduction thus to sane and fully enjoyable drinking that we expect to see restored to all but the most backward sections of our country with the final repeal of the prohibition amendment.

IN THESE days of plans to help the farmer, our attention has been called to a scheme put forward in the Middle West and endorsed by various agricultural associations. It occurred to somebody that about 17,000,000,000 gallons of gasoline are consumed in the United States every year. Suppose that the law required every gallon to contain 10 percent of ethyl alcohol. The result would be 1,700,000,000 gallons of the said alcohol. If this were made of products grown in the United States, it would use up during any given year a fourth of the corn crop or—should you prefer to reckon in that—more than three-fourths of the wheat crop. Distributed properly, the demand for ethyl would more than take up the slack created by the drying up of export markets. The sponsors of the plan likewise declare that no overproduction would follow, since there would be ample room for expansion up to any point at all likely to be reached. This idea is exceedingly simple, which is greatly to its advantage. We have long felt that the big trouble with so many blue-prints of a reconstructed society is their illegibility. But it nevertheless seems to us that there are great difficulties in the way. Laws compelling the use of ethyl would doubtless be resisted both by oil producers and by users of motor cars, who would see in this measure only another nuisance tax. It is therefore very doubtful whether they could be passed as binding upon interstate traffic, and almost certain that they would be ineffective in oil-producing states. Again, one is by no means certain that the effect of a 10-percent ethyl decree would be higher prices for grain, which is after all the necessary goal. Even so, the plan is worthy of earnest consideration.

Salvation for the Farmer?

IN LATE years it has become easy to express impatience or contempt with the old-fashioned prohibitionist, or, to use the old-fashioned name, temperance reformer. Much of the feeling has been just, since the temperamental and intellectual deficiencies of a certain powerful type of prohibition thinker were plainly related to the evils of prohibition. Those who can simplify the complex problem of human rights out of existence, those who have no understanding of the rootedness of the festal instinct, those who can impose and defend fanatical tabus in the service of their particular moral philosophy, certainly have had a good deal to do with the plight from which we are just emerging. But, beyond this, it has been easy to condemn the temperance reformer just because it has been fashionable. Clichés about "blue-noses" and "hypocrites" have become fixed parts of our common speech, almost. Perhaps the moment has arrived to point out that these clichés, like all clichés everywhere, have acted as substitutes for thought. Those who use them have no idea what made temperance reformers possible in the first place. They suppose, automatically, that it was merely the desire to meddle and to dictate.

Lest We Forget

IT IS known that the problem of drunkenness is linked up with prohibition. It is too little remembered that the problem of drunkenness antedates prohibition; and it is not remembered at all that one of the established ways in which social-minded people, and not always narrow ones, expressed their concern for the suffering, the degraded and the very poor, was by becoming temperance workers. Their hopes were illusory, their grasp of the problem incomplete; but their cause was desperately real. There has recently appeared in the *Herald Tribune* a letter from a ninety-three-year-old veteran of that war, which might well act as a sobering reminder to all of us of what conditions really were like when the law permitted a wide-open saloon, and politics controlled it. She (the fighter was often "she") recalls one of her many experiences in her work of social salvage: taking a little girl of six away from a screaming drunk mother after the child had tried in vain to quiet the madwoman. "Now," the letter concludes, "the saloon is to come back." That it is not to come back, in the sense in which this fine old woman knew and hated it, must be the resolve of good citizens everywhere. To exchange being preyed upon illegally for the old condition in which especially the weak and poor were preyed upon legally, would be something worse than a mistake. It would be a tragic retrogression.

THE ANNUAL bulletin of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching is at hand, and presents some interesting information regarding the history and make-up of that admirable group. It consists of the State Councils of thirteen Southern states, with a Central Council as a clearing-house for their suggestions and ideas. It is, quite distinctly, "not an attempt to set up or perpetuate a new organization," having no separate local units, dues or conventions, and working through the organizations for women which already exist in its territory. It likewise is very clear as to its freedom from any sort of political or legislative commitments. It is purely educational in character and purpose, disseminating needed information and statistics throughout the communities it covers, and directing its efforts to the promotion of a civilized, law-regarding opinion on the subject of the dreadful crime it is striving to eradicate.

Against Lynching

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WE HAVE already published in these columns our judgment of the high value of this work, so quietly and effectively done, and have called attention to the heartening record of the year recently closed, which presented an all-time low (to date) in lynchings: six for the South, eight for the entire country. There can be no question that the Association has been intimately concerned in bringing about the change in attitudes and conditions which made this progress possible. A very effective part of its technique consists of focusing on the sheriffs and other officers of the law who are directly concerned with apprehending and guarding prisoners. By condemning in very plain terms the cowardice of those who yield their prisoners, under threats or even outright violence, and by praise, equally public, for officers who show that they cannot be intimidated, these women are undoubtedly altering the social consciousness of the South in a measurable way. The bulletin pursues this method, giving with impersonal but explicit detail the histories of the eight lynchings referred to above, as well as those of several attempted lynchings prevented by the bravery and sense of duty of the sheriffs in charge. It is a splendid work, and we repeat the wish, noted here some time ago, that they may attain their objective for 1933—a lynchless South.

NEVER before, in all probability, has the Catholic educational work of this country faced so many difficulties and quandaries. The issues which clamor for settlement are only in part financial. Individual and family morale has been impaired; the lack of a clear-cut general program of moral and religious training makes itself keenly felt. Accordingly more than usual interest attaches to the thirtieth annual meeting of the National Catholic Educational Association, which will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 26 to 29. Note that this is the thirtieth meeting! So many years have passed since Dr. Shields, Bishop Shahan and others began the work of coördinating and guiding Catholic school effort. The Association is chiefly responsible for increased concern with psychological and teacher knowledge among parochial school educators, and it has likewise been sincere and resolute in fostering higher collegiate standards. Age has not withered it. One feels certain that the St. Paul meeting will interest and benefit all those who decide to attend.

Educators in Session

MR. SEWARD COLLINS, editor of the *Bookman*, has decided to stop issuing that magazine and to offer instead the *American Review* as an organ of "opposition from the right." An editorial manifesto in the initial number makes the following announcement: "The magazine is a response to the widespread and growing feeling that the forces and principles which have produced the modern chaos are incapable of yielding any solution; that the only hope is a return to fundamental and tested principles which have been largely pushed aside." These principles are seen as getting the support of four groups which are the Humanists, the Chester-Bellocian Distributists, the Neo-Scholastics and the Southern Agrarians. Mr. Collins hopes, therefore, to provide a common stamping-ground for these groups and to give them, above all, a chance to "thresh out their differences." If they proceed to do so, the *American Review* should ring with right lusty blows, for we cannot imagine any people less like to agree than, say, Mr. Belloc and a few Neo-Scholastics of our acquaintance. But this is only a minor matter. It is an excellent and encouraging thing that an editor should possess the courage to attack, in this country, much that passes for "enlightenment." We have a feeling that bad philosophy is largely a matter of sloth—of the mental processes of individuals who confuse bohemian habits with intellectual superiority. Mr. Collins may force some to use their brains.

Against the Tide

TWO IMPORTANT anniversaries in Catholic journalism are celebrated this month—the twenty-fourth anniversary of our distinguished and learned confrère, *America*, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of that excellent and highly successful diocesan weekly newspaper, the Brooklyn *Tablet*. To both of these journals, and that of course takes in a lot of human territory from the directors and editors through all the ramifications of staff and contributors to those last but certainly not least—certainly not the least, noble and appreciated, elusive objects of our tenderest thoughts and solicitations!—the intelligent readers, we extend our felicitations and best wishes. The silver jubilee number of the *Tablet* in some fifteen pages of a thirty-six-page issue, gives a stirring history of the ups and downs, the struggles, the defeats, the triumphs and the firm basis for continued service of one Catholic newspaper. This number, we believe, might well serve as a text-book in courses on Catholic journalism in our schools and colleges. The realities of such journalism are revealed with impressive pungency, sincerity and good humor.

Catholic Journalism

BISHOP MOLLOY of Brooklyn has contributed in no small measure to the success of the *Tablet*, continuing the interest shown by his predecessor, the late Bishop McDonnell, who in 1909 bought for the diocese the company that publishes the paper. At that time, Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago was Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn and president of the Tablet Publishing Company. He was another power in the making of this famous paper. The distinguished names associated with it are too many for us to do justice to them in our limited space here. Besides to the students of Catholic journalism of whom we have already thought, we can recommend this jubilee number of the *Tablet*

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to everyone interested in how a successful Catholic paper is made, including fellow workers in the vineyard on other Catholic journals throughout the country. Catholics especially will find interest, we believe, in the report of Mr. Patrick F. Scanlan, the managing editor, on the paper's skirmishes with officious members of the Anti-Saloon League seeking to dictate to it on the question of what constituted Catholic faith and morals, its success in winning Sunday baseball privileges for the working people of Brooklyn, its struggles against moving pictures that seriously were contra faith and morals, especially of the young, against the Klan and fake nuns with lurid stories, dishonest magazine agents, bigoted political discriminations and against what used to be (and happily is no more) a rather generally misinformed and hostile daily press of greater New York; as well as its championing of positive Catholic Action in various forms. *America's* silver jubilee next year we are noting on our calendar. We hope that we shall have the pleasure of keeping the date and felicitating its family at that time in these pages.

The Commonweal Appeal

OUR REQUEST for aid to remove the indebtedness which hovers over this magazine and to assure the continuance of the work done by The Calvert Associates has met with a response which we can only term decidedly gratifying. The idea of dividing our debt into a thousand units of $26.00 each seems to have caught fire. Of course some donations received were larger than this amount, and some were smaller. That is entirely as it should be. But if we continue to think in terms of $26.00, we find that to date 193 units out of 1,000 are accounted for. In view of the exceedingly difficult times, this prompt response is both encouraging and satisfying. It indicates again that those who have become our friends are very good friends, indeed—"silent partners" whose share in the work we gratefully recognize as equal to our own. Could it be possible to increase their number, to find among the 20,000,000 Catholics of this country a few thousand more persons who would become permanent subscribers to THE COMMONWEAL if properly approached, the road ahead would be clear of at least those physical and financial obstacles which so greatly impede progress and effort. Just now, however, we give cordial and sincere thanks to those who have never failed to lend a helping hand and of whose friendship we shall be mindful even if the magazine and the effort it has tried to sponsor were, in spite of such loyal cooperation, to cease existing.

SYMBOLICAL of the spirit in which our appeal has been received are numerous letters for which we here give collective thanks. Our space permits reprinting only one. Few dioceses in the United States have suffered more from the depression than some in the Middle West, where declining industrial production and bank failures combined to affect virtually everyone, whether rich or poor. Nevertheless His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop of one such diocese, sends us this message: "The serious financial situation which confronts THE COMMONWEAL distresses me very much. We are so overwhelmed with financial problems in our parishes and institutions of the diocese that we cannot come to your assistance at the present time as we should like to do. Is there not some way in which our Catholic laity can be aroused to appreciate the tremendous importance of your publication? I trust you will find it possible to reach them directly. Surely there ought to be sufficient interest to help you raise the necessary funds to keep your journal from going out of existence. You state in your editorial that 'such an eventuality is unthinkable to us.' If it were to happen it would cast a blight on all similar efforts for another generation. I am sending herewith my check, wishing that it were at least ten times the amount. I cannot, however, do more now, being beset on all sides with appeals and demands."

FOCUSING PUBLIC OPINION

LAST week we dealt with the situation created by the conflict between government and what is termed "public opinion." We said that whereas everybody ardently desires action, the number of suggestions as to the form which action might take is endless. One plan gets in the way of another plan. Accordingly there is a growing demand for some sort of dictatorship, and in actual practice flirtations with what seem to be dictatorial powers. What are we to make of the trend?

In a sense the whole of Western society is face to face with the same problem. The philosopher Hegel once declared that the law governing the development of civilization might be phrased somewhat as follows: a dominant idea—a thesis—is sponsored by the group and pushed to an extreme; there follows antagonism to this idea—an antithesis—which in turn works itself out to all its logical consequences; and finally there emerges a union of both—a synthesis—which reigns during a period of relative stability until the process begins over again. One can make absurd uses of this Hegelian statement, but within limits it seems to account for very many things. Thus the liberal, democratic thesis was carried through the era of the French Revolution and used to color varied Social Democratic (or plain democratic) pictures of the ideal state. Today we are obviously facing, so far as Europe is concerned, a trend to antithesis rendered particularly violent by pressure from Russia. Italian Fascism was obviously created as an offset to Bolshevism; and the best explanation of Hitler is the strength of Social Democratic and Communistic sentiment in the Germany of yesterday. If Europe is lucky, it will eventually attain to a synthesis and a new period of relative stability and good fortune.

At first sight it appears that the United States is in

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a very much more advantageous position than is the Old World. No doubt there are also positive reasons for believing in America—in its wealth, homogeneous political tradition, pacific situation. Nevertheless the basic problems which confront society may ultimately find Europeans better prepared than are the citizens of the New World. For what are these problems? In the final analysis, they are due to an absurdly simple cause. Throughout the world, economic organizations have been yanked back to the status of 1913, with these differences, that the wealth displaced by four years of fighting has, in spite of the speculative operations of a decade, been neither recovered nor redistributed, and that the impetus to mechanization given by the war has profoundly altered the relations between production and consumption traditional under capitalism. It is really only when we reinterpret this quite commonplace event in terms of human suffering, deprivation, unrest and despair that it becomes fearfully fascinating and complex.

But complex in a decidedly novel way. So far nothing has occurred in the Western world as a result of the depression which, from the simple physical point of view, is comparable to what happened many times in the past during famines and revolutions. What nation is now starving as the Irish starved less than a century ago? Or where is a people the misery and nakedness of which is half so appalling as was the plight of the Germans at the close of the Thirty Years' War? The promptness with which a measure of relief has been offered is a tribute to the efficacy of the Socialistic thinking done by recent generations. On the other hand, this very relief is one of the most puzzling things about the present time. It makes some countries look fantastically like feed barns, with human cattle being brought in for a meal at stated intervals and then turned loose again. The fear of being some time obliged to join the herd makes all of us who still possess the means of livelihood afraid to spend—afraid to exchange money for things.

Now though much of the talk about the dole being "un-American" was stupid, there was certainly something sound in it. The economic foundations of our society, as laid during the nineteenth century and abetted both by the slavery settlement and the labor movement, were the belief that the individual could best provide for his future and the will so to provide. As a result, the United States was able to boast of at least one form of freedom—liberty to come and go, change employment, shift from teaching to bank management. Relief, if continued over a long period of time, undoubtedly undermines that independence. It cuts off the energy which has fed a whole century of development. But—and this seems a far more interesting point—any thinkable plan to make relief unnecessary and to put men back to work involves so marked a sacrifice of personal initiative as to make one wonder whether men will be able to stand the psychological strain involved. From this standpoint, Europe is unquestionably better off than we are in the United States. It has been inured for generations to some kind of social management.

The gap in our collective development can be bridged only by sound collective guidance and control. Our major problem, therefore, is not to devise "solutions" for the multitude of existing puzzles. It is rather the reconstruction of a government able to act smoothly, promptly, resolutely and intelligently. And we feel that the Constitution, even though some appeals to it are legitimately suspect, adequately provides what is at present needed. The men who devised our basic law were trying to create the governmental instrument now desired. They conceived of the President and the Congress as able and qualified to reach common decisions; and nothing would have astonished them more than a pre-view of the slavish dependence of a contemporary Washingtonian upon his constituency. According to the plan of 1793, a congressman was to be a competent and public-spirited gentleman whose job it was to use his head. Emphatically he was not to be a representative from Indiana whose entire official life would be spent "putting over" a statute in order to retain the friendship of a foreign-born minority group in his district. If we can restore the constitutional idea to some status in reality, we can create a responsible government without scanning the horizon for a native-born Mussolini.

No doubt the attempt to do so would be a little trying, but after all life as it is can scarcely be termed fun and the quest for Il Duce would be fairly strenuous. Some kind of action is obviously in the cards, if we are not to keep wallowing about in the mire of misfortune until exasperation breeds revolution. And so let us venture a few suppositions. Suppose that every lobby or near-lobby in Washington were abolished by law, the rule to apply to organizations as well as to interests, so that there could not be found in the national capital a single group exerting special pressure upon Congress, the President and the departments. Suppose that during sessions Congress were virtually cloistered, with public hearings postponed until after actual lawmaking had ceased and with missives from constituents intercepted. Suppose that filibusters were declared illegal.

If results did not appear under such an arrangement, there would still be time to advertise for a dictator. The rôle of organizations, civic and otherwise, would be altered, but they themselves would be in a fair way to become far more valuable and significant. Today the trouble with belonging to any progressive (or otherwise) group is that just when things begin to get interesting, somebody is bound to propose a march to Washington. When the discussion group realizes that its business is to create popular understanding of social and political problems, and above all to evoke the kind of leadership needed for adequate administration of the nation's welfare, it will stop jamming traffic and serve a useful purpose.

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THE LONG ROAD HOME: I

By JOHN MOODY

For many years few, if any, names have been better known in American financial and business circles than that of John Moody. In his autobiography, "The Long Road Home," soon to be published by the Macmillan Company, he relates in a frank and fascinating manner his long and extraordinary career. And all through those years, he was a searcher after that peace which the world —whether Wall Street or Main Street—cannot give, and which he found at last in the Catholic Church of his English forefathers. We are privileged to give three selections from this deeply interesting book.—The Editors.

G. K. CHESTERTON says, "There are two ways of getting home; and one of them is to stay there. The other is to walk round the whole world till you come back to the same place."

I have been one of those who chose the second way; and this is the story of my experiences and findings on that long journey—that life journey across the years from boyhood, with its dreams and hopes and faith and trust, to the time when, through trial and error, life's lessons should be fully learned, and their meaning understood.

But the question may well be asked: Why should I, a mere business man of no importance outside my little world, indulge in such insufferable conceit as to write a story about myself, and flaunt it before the public?

Before I answer let me say that I do not know how to tell the story in any other way; and while it is of necessity egocentric, I perhaps have persuaded myself that it is not intentionally egotistic. Were this not the case, I hardly think I would be bold enough to write it.

It is not a story of achievement; I am not "rounding out" my career as does a modern captain of industry by shooting forth a bragging story to tell a gaping public just how he did it. No, God forbid! Though my active, objective life is told, with its successes, failures and mistakes, its foolish acts and aims and its wiser ones, its pathos, humor and the rest—this is merely background, and a chronicle of events. The important thing in the life of every man, is not what he has done or left undone, but what life has done to him, or for him, mentally or subjectively—spiritually, if you will. The worth-while story has to do with the unfolding or shriveling of his soul, as he stumbles along the rocky road and up some steep ascent, or wanders down the primrose path.

This is the sort of story I have tried to write. "The Long Road Home," as I have depicted it, though it penetrates the market place, and wanders through a jungle of materialistic nothings, has little significance except as a completed picture. The worth-while moral in the story is, that it is still possible for a man, who has been a product of this hard, unbelieving materialistic age in which we live, to be naive enough to confess his faith with unrestricted candor.

* * * * * *

Twenty dollars a month! This was the tune to which Wall Street welcomed me. It was indeed a setback after having painfully climbed up the woodenware ladder for nearly seven years. Before I left the woodenware world I had been receiving more than twice this amount.

Still, there were compensations. Instead of laboring in a dusty and dirty low-grade factory environment, in the midst of a gang of tough, profane and boozing packers and porters, with a slave-driver boss who swore like a trooper all day long, I was now ushered into an environment of soft carpets, roll-top desks and well-dressed gentlemanly clerks; and with employers who spoke in soft voices, never swore, and always smiled when speaking to the underlings. And whereas formerly I had viewed hundred-dollar checks with awe, I now saw hundred-thousand-dollar checks dealt out like cards from a pack.

It really seemed like an emergence from hell into heaven, and I thrived in this new environment from the very start. Though at first I was only an errand boy, bellhop and stamp licker, I progressed to a higher plane very rapidly. Within four months my pay was increased, and within six I was working "on the books," and again my salary was advanced. Before the first year was over I was receiving more money than had come to me after all those years of woodenware struggle; and thus was easily able to do my bit at home.

Wall Street in 1890 was simple and modest compared to the great financial center of today, and the financial transactions were modest also. A million-dollar bond flotation then created almost as much of a sensation as did a hundred-million-dollar holding company scheme in 1929. Men viewed with awe the ten-million-dollar deposit total of the National City Bank; this bank then seemed more of an "octopus" than it did forty years later with its two billions of deposits. But big business, mass production and high finance had not yet arrived; banking groups and mammoth syndicates of capital and credit were still in the future. It was still the day of the lone-hand player, with Russell Sage, Jay Gould and Collis P. Huntington as individual controllers of the railroads or other properties they dominated. J. P. Morgan (the elder) was forging to the front with his strong backing of foreign capital, but Harriman and Hill had not yet "arrived." John D. Rockefeller was the American Croesus, but his interests were detached from Wall Street, while little Andrew Carnegie, the steel king, had all his properties in his own vest pocket. The holding company and the investment trust were practically unknown, except to a limited extent in the railroad field. The modern investment banking business had not

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been invented; stock brokerage houses and small banks made up 90 percent of Wall Street activities.

Nor was the physical appearance of the Street anything like that of the vast financial district of today. It was before the advent of the skyscraper, and Trinity Church spire towered far above every surrounding structure. Today not a single building is standing of those which graced Wall Street in 1890, except the sub-treasury, the United States Trust Company building, and the old Custom House—the latter now being the headquarters of the National City Bank. Many buildings have been twice replaced since those modest days; and we now see single skyscrapers forty or fifty stories high, occupying ground space which accommodated a dozen or more five- or six-story buildings at that time. Nor did banking firms maintain offices that vie with kings' palaces. Russell Sage, the richest man in finance, did all his business in a dingy third-floor-back of a rabbit-warren rookery in Exchange Place, where the dark, winding stairs were the only elevator. And J. P. Morgan often sat in his shirt sleeves in an open office, where he could keep tabs on all his employees from head clerk to office boy.

More fortunate than the average youth who went into Wall Street during that period, I was with a house in which there was every opportunity to receive a broad and diversified training in banking and finance. The firm of Spencer Trask and Company was among the best private banking houses in the Street, but not so large that a youth would be buried and confined to one groove of activity. During the ten years I remained with this firm, I was able to shift from one type of work to another, and by the end of the decade I knew all the ropes. When I left to go into business on my own account, there was no phase of the investment banking game that I did not know something about, or in which I had not had some experience.

I was also most fortunate in my employers. They were a group of very unusual men, high-minded Christian gentlemen; and during all that decade the business was dominated by one of the most extraordinarily brilliant personalities that I have ever known in my experience. George Foster Peabody was a man of but thirty-eight in 1890, but already he was making his mark as a constructive financial genius of the first order, and as a far-seeing business builder. He was Spencer Trask's strong right arm. He was both visionary and practical—a rare combination—and under his forceful leadership this firm was then building the foundations of its later large position in the American investment world.

But personally Peabody was not a money-chaser; he never dreamed the dream of the multimillionaire. Had he aspired to the acquisition of great personal wealth and power, or succumbed to the gospel of greed like many others, he might well have matched the most successful. But he retired from active business early (in 1906), and at this writing is still living at a grand old age, after a quarter century spent in altruistic activities and public service; a model for his countrymen.

The influence of George Foster Peabody on my own ambitions, activities, hopes and dreams during those plastic years of my young manhood can scarcely be overstated. Almost at once he became my ideal business man. Moreover, he was largely responsible for the positive political and economic views I then adopted and adhered to for many years thereafter. He was an aggressive free-trade Democrat in politics and one of the strong champions of Grover Cleveland.

Prior to this time I had taken no active interest in politics and knew little or nothing about the burning political questions of the day; and although my father was a Democrat and I had classed myself as one, I assumed that in following a Wall Street career I would just naturally evolve into a Republican. I had thought that all bankers were Republicans, of course. But George Peabody shocked me out of my ignorance in very short order; and he also brought to the surface in me a streak of political aggressiveness which got me into dire difficulties in later years!

I had been in Wall Street a couple of years, of course, before I grew into this political phase. In those two years I was getting my perspective of things financial, and also enough experience to destroy many an illusion. Wall Street is ever full of romance for the young; and full of mysteries also; mysteries which take a lifetime to unravel. I suppose even the oldest and wisest of us can never come to know in complete detail and perspective the secret churning of Wall Street's wheels. But I did learn a lot before I had been there many years; for I was an observing, reflective little kid.

It is often asserted that Wall Street puts a premium on native ability and cleverness, and that the shrewdest men of the nation naturally gravitate there. But I had not been in the Street so very long before I suspected that the proportion of obtuse, stupid, incompetent blunderers is just as large there as anywhere else, if not larger. Although the Street does attract a proportion of capable and aggressive fortune seekers, it also draws like a magnet a myriad of lambs and morons from all parts of the country. And these lambs are not merely of the general public who go there to be fleeced, but they include many of the rank and file of bankers, brokers, security dealers and their clerks, who, in the long run, are almost as completely trimmed as are the innocents from abroad.

Wolves in sheep's clothing abound, of course; but in their profession of tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, they frequently are shorn themselves.

I say I suspected this condition very early; but bitter experience ground it well into me by 1893. As was the case after the great panic of 1929, nearly everybody in Wall Street, high or low, "lost his shirt" during that earlier crash and ensuing depression. All the big fellows whom the public were following, were caught napping, and all but wiped off the map.

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Wild gambling was the order of the day, even to myself. Well before the great crash I had learned what a bucket shop was, and had made my contacts with one. Bucket shops in those days (and perhaps in these) seemed to be operated primarily to enable bankers' and brokers' clerks secretly to follow their employers or the pool operators in stock market speculations. Few reputable houses would allow their own clerks to speculate on margin, nor would they knowingly accept the speculative accounts of clerks from other brokerage or banking houses. But the philanthropic bucket shop was not so narrow-minded. It would take the money of anybody, anywhere, any time.

My memory of the crash of 1893 is therefore especially vivid in its bucket-shop aspects. A round dozen of the supposedly model clerks of our house, including myself, formed a small pool a month or two before the panic, to operate in ten-share lots in one of our firm's specialties—a railroad stock of promise. We all thought we knew this stock was going sky-high very shortly. I put in three hundred dollars, partly borrowed, and for a little while, as the quotation crept slowly up, we happily dreamed over our paper profits and saw visions of opulence just ahead. And then—bingo! Almost overnight came the panic, and we were paupers once more; while the bucket shop quietly folded its tent and stole away.

From this time on disaster followed disaster. The bottom having dropped out of business as a result of the crash, our salaries soon were cut in half. It seemed (as again it seemed in 1931 and 1932) that all Wall Street was about to go out of business for good. Employees, little and big, were being dispensed with as the hopeless months wore on, and I feared that I would be the next to go. I had lost all my savings, and again was in debt because of my borrowings. Moreover, my father had been retired the year before, and now our home was being carried entirely by my brothers and myself.

Grover Cleveland swept the country in the autumn of 1892, but "Republican misrule" under Benjamin Harrison had so undermined the credit of the federal government, and fictitious prosperity and inflation had so fostered speculation, corruption and incompetence in both governmental and business fields, that when Cleveland was ushered into the White House in the spring of 1893, the country was already on the verge of a major crash. In fact, such a crash was long overdue; the water-logged ship had been kept afloat just long enough for the captain and crew to be changed.

Still the wiseacres of Wall Street had remained optimists right up to the time when the ground began to crumble under their feet. They were not supermen after all; and it was from this time on that I no longer placed great faith in the wisdom of the master minds of the financial world. I was a sceptic on the big fellows ever after that.

But this scepticism did not extend with me to men like George Foster Peabody. He clearly foresaw the wreck the politicians were making of the country, but it was his hope that with Cleveland in the White House, and with a strong Democratic Congress backing him, a quick change of policy might go far to stabilize matters. And I pinned my own faith on his opinion.

It was far too late, however. The crash came with a rush in the late spring and acute panicky conditions continued all through the summer. Then followed a hectic period of almost four years, during which the credit of the federal government was saved from utter collapse only by the courage and statesmanship of Grover Cleveland. The Democratic majority in Congress was honeycombed with unsound, hair-brained financial fanatics and cranks, but in the face of this fact, Cleveland not only forced through a repeal of the vicious silver purchase law, but had the courage to sell gold bonds in London in 1894, in order to save the United States Treasury from defaulting on its gold payments.

Those years of my early schooling in America's great financial center were desperate times. Banks failed continuously for two or three years, nearly half the railroads became insolvent, wheat dropped below fifty cents a bushel and farm mortgages were foreclosed from coast to coast; the steel and iron business almost closed down, while Socialism, fiat-moneyism and revolution threatened to overwhelm the country; millions of men were out of work, and there were bread lines in every city.

Finally, in 1896, William Jennings Bryan, the boy orator, jumped to the front on the radical wave as the Democratic candidate for President. But fortunately Bryan was defeated; and his crushing defeat was largely due to the leadership of Grover Cleveland, who encouraged a split away from his own party among the sound-money Democrats. It is unnecessary to say that Peabody followed Cleveland rather than Bryan.

To my father, these disastrous events of the Cleveland administration came as a great blow to his lifelong belief that Democratic rule meant certain prosperity for the country. Ever after that he was a politically disillusioned man. I don't think he ever again voted for a Democratic presidential candidate, though he never could bring himself to vote the Republican ticket. He just took to the woods, like many another.

In 1896 I made my début as a stump speaker. In twenty or more feeble cart-tail harangues during this first Bryan-McKinley campaign, I did my little bit, as a Gold Democrat, to keep Bryan out of the White House. I then made the discovery that I could talk to a crowd far more successfully than to an individual; and I have been more or less foolishly doing this ever since. The secret is that you can lay down the law to an audience without let or hindrance; but in individual discussion it is always possible that the law may be laid down to you!

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PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

By ERNEST F. DuBRUL

THE COLLEGE OF HERALDS might draw a coat of arms for our present American social system, for which an appropriate design might be something like this. At the right of the shield, running off for its life, could be one of those starved looking heraldic stags to represent private ownership of property hurrying out of the picture. In the center, symbolic of our present corporationism, should be a "lion rampant" with upraised paws, striking at the stag. At the left, to represent Communism coming into the picture, a "bear salient" leaping for the back of the unsuspecting lion who is too intent on getting the stag—or the swag—to notice the bear coming on behind him.

Few people realize how fast private ownership of property is passing out of our American picture. Unless they study the facts of corporate growth they cannot believe that the major part of our financial and non-financial business is conducted by only three hundred corporations. Such studies are now available in a book entitled "The Modern Corporation and Private Property," which is a masterpiece of sound research on the subject, written by A. A. Berle, jr., and Gardiner C. Means of Columbia University.

These authors give authentic references which show that "corporationism" today is as much of a social institution as feudalism was in the middle ages. Like the feudal barons who came to dominate the economic and social institutions of the middle ages, the book shows how the controllers of our large corporations are fast doing the same thing for our age. A fine companion book to this is "Frankenstein Incorporated" written by Maurice Wormser, professor in the Fordham University Law School. Between both books one gets a very good picture of how this state of affairs has come about, and how "corporationism" is blotting out our ancient institution of private property, in direct pace with the change from individual wealth to corporate wealth.

Defenders of the present order stoutly assert that the corporation system is one of private ownership. Well, suppose we "look at the record," and face the facts. A corporation is not such an aggregation of persons as a partnership is. By a twist of legalistic interpretation it is a "fictitious" person having its own existence independent of that of all the persons who may temporarily be holders of its stock. In spite of popular notions to the contrary, stockholders do not own the property of the corporation nor any infinitesimal part of it. The property is wholly owned by the corporation as a separate entity. All that any stockholder owns is a piece of paper. Even in case of the dissolution of a solvent corporation, the stockholder could not take any actual property as his distribution share. The corporation must sell the property and divide the cash or "securities" proceeds among the stockholders.

The stockholders' rights in large corporations simmer down in practice to the privilege of signing proxies, and to receive such dividends as the directors jolly well choose to declare. In practice the voting for directors is an empty form. The stockholder sends in a proxy—or he does not—but the directors and their friends constitute a self-perpetuating group of controllers. On rare occasions one such group does succeed in ousting another by a battle of proxies.

As to dividends, if the directors do not choose to declare them, even though large profits be earned, it is practically impossible for an individual stockholder to force a distribution. The directors have practically absolute control, and they can do just about whatever they may choose to do with the corporation's capital and profits, and with the stockholders' supposed rights. What some have done is well set out in the two books mentioned above.

So in spite of euphemistic terms used in reports to stockholders about "your properties," in cold fact, the stockholder's "ownership" is in no wise a real ownership or control of property. When he buys stock he buys purely a hope of income. His wealth, measured by the price of his stock, varies with the hopes and fears of himself and other stockholders. These day to day variations can be and are influenced by actions of those who have inside information, and the ordinary stockholder is never one of these.

Since corporate reports are far from ideal and never can be so, only men who are intimately connected with the inside management can make even a rough guess as to the probabilities of realizing a return on the market price. Then, too, corporate properties nowadays are so vast and so complex that their directors cannot hope to have intimate personal knowledge of all the property controlled by the corporation. Even their executive managers cannot, in some cases, have such a detailed knowledge. Yet the directors, officially, formulate the policies which govern the stockholder's suppositious wealth as measured in market values of pieces of paper. Earning capacity is not a standard of measurement of these values. Earning capacity can change so very swiftly that even managers of these vast corporations cannot always estimate very closely what the company's stock is fairly worth. Some showed this inability by buying stocks of their own companies in 1930 and 1931.

Stock market quotations have no necessary relationship to the amount of physical property or business done by the corporations. They have no real relation to "book values," being at times much lower and at

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other times much higher for the same stocks. Some stocks never sell close down to their book values and others never sell close up to them. "Book values" are merely bed-time stories. And as for statements of earnings, in a large number of cases, it seems more important for managers to "show" profits than to "make" them. Stock prices often vary quite widely from any standards that men have tried to establish for measuring values in terms of earnings, as a rough capitalization of hopes of income. Stocks which at the height of the boom were ballyhooed as easily worth twenty-five to even fifty times their then earnings, are now earning nothing.

It is a disagreeable reality that no one who buys a stock certificate is investing in property. At the very best he is speculating on income, and in millions of cases he is merely gambling on price changes. The more of our national wealth which is concentrated in corporate form, the more the people of the nation are inevitably bound to the stock tickers. With the progressive absorption of business by large corporations, the average citizen has less and less opportunities for investing his savings in actual productive business property. So as this process goes on, our citizens are more and more fettered, not by chains such as bound ancient galley slaves, but by thousands of miles of ticker tape daily reeled off in brokerage houses in every city.

Curiously enough even rich men, and women, do not seem to realize whither their own wealth is taking wings. For as mere stockholders, their own wealth is placed at the mercy of the judgment and power, honestly or dishonestly exercised by management. Large and small personal wealths, invested in stocks, bonds and credits, can be and have been dissipated by serious honest errors of managerial judgment, and large capitals as well as small ones have been and can be confiscated by large scale dishonesties of men like Krueger and Insull. To minimize their risks, large "investors" are diversifying their holdings, but this very act dissipates their own power to control corporate policies which affect the values of these diversified holdings. In consequence, even though one may own goodly blocks of diversified stocks, his wealth is at the mercy of managers who often own much less total wealth than a rich stockholder does.

Business history, as well as political history, is full of lessons which teach the danger of unrestrained "rugged individualism" which acquires much power for personal aggrandizement. Recent events have merely added more cases to this age-old knowledge.

We have permitted two hundred non-financial corporations to become so big that their functioning is thought by many loose thinkers to be an absolute necessity for our social welfare. Some men—and not all of them Socialists—think that there is no escape from the abuses of this new feudalism except for the state to take over these huge aggregations and operate them as public institutions. They realize that these corporations are now too big to be allowed to run at the sweet will of managements who are tempted beyond human strength to enrich and entrench themselves at the expense of the public, of the workers and of the suppositious owners, the stockholders.

No counsellors of public ownership can explain how these economic giants will be any better managed under political control, than our cities, large and small. They ask us to fly from corporate evils which we see are bad to political evils which are obviously as bad.

It is strange that those who recognize the evils of our present corporationism but fear the evils of Socialism seldom think of back tracking to smaller corporations. Too many people think that this back tracking is simply out of the question. Yet corporations are creatures of the state, made by public law, and there is ample power in the legislatures and in Congress to break them down to sizes which will not be socially dangerous. Under the Constitution, Congress has wide powers to regulate commerce between the states. Under this Constitution, Congress can declare it contrary to public policy to allow corporations to grow too large for the public good. Congress can, when the people choose, declare what degree of size a corporation shall be allowed to attain or retain. Under the Interstate Commerce clause, the Congress has ample power to forbid interstate transportation of products of corporations which are now too large for public welfare.

Corporations, as creatures of law, can be confined by the law which made them to operating only one plant instead of being allowed to agglutinate a multitude of plants. Under the Income Tax Amendment, Congress has power to levy such progressive surtaxes on large corporation incomes as will make it unprofitable for them to continue to be too large. Levying such taxes would soon lead to their split up into smaller units. Such split ups have been made under the anti-trust laws, in the tobacco and oil cases. Cutting down corporation size is easier than trying to regulate them. It would require an enormous bureaucracy to try to regulate the many businesses which employ the great mass of workers.

Naturally, the back tracking policies would be bitterly opposed by our leading business men. But realistically it seems a case either of that or of expropriation of these corporations by the state in self-defense. The break-up policy would preserve and widen opportunities for individualism, while the socialization policy would only add to the present economic evils a host of political evils. So our corporationists should prefer the breaking up into smaller units rather than the alternative of public ownership. We simply cannot leave them alone.

Too many people are getting to think that the public's only choice is between government red tape and Wall Street ticker tape. If this is true, the public's choice will be for red tape. Red tape management will at least promise more security to millions than ticker tape management has been able to give them.

As it stands now, along with the family and home,

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the institution of private property is vanishing before our very eyes. With it must vanish the liberty which we may value too little to preserve. To preserve individualism and liberty for stock owners, for workers and for the body social as well, we must back track to smaller corporations instead of allowing the present trend to continue to the point where people will jump in desperation from the frying pan of irresponsible industrial feudalism to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To those who prefer to hang on to the present condition until too late, we might explain the coat of arms suggested in the beginning of this article and direct their attention to what happened to one Nicholas Romanov and his friends.

EPISTLE FOR THE TIMES

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

I REJOICE that in the appropriate season of Lent, the *American Spectator* has begun an examination of conscience. Such an act may even lead it into penitential exercises, or, still further, to the reformation of its somewhat deplorable behavior. That it will lead to its conversion is probably not to be expected, even by such a convinced supernaturalist as myself, with all my firm faith in miracles. Nevertheless, that such a group of indurated egotists as the distinguished editors of this paper should "be most anxious to print an intelligent article representing exactly the contrary of their philosophy," must be accepted as nothing less than a spiritual portent. But as I happen to be the writer honored by their invitation to write this intelligent article in question, I am overwhelmed by what seems to be the insuperable difficulty of accomplishing the task—eager as I am to see it done. Perhaps, however, by stating the difficulty, I may at least clear the ground for its removal. It may be, of course, that it is my own intelligence which is lacking—but, anyhow, I cannot see how a really intelligent article can be written about an unintelligible subject. Putting it another way, how can something be written about nothing?

In other, less concise, words, while I am perfectly clear and definite as to my own philosophy, by which I am prepared to measure and judge, according to my best ability, all other different or contrary philosophies, I cannot use this instrument in the case of the *American Spectator*, because so far as I can make out, the *American Spectator* does not possess a philosophy. Mr. George Jean Nathan has a philosophy, discernible in his work; so have Mr. Ernest Boyd, Mr. Dreiser, Mr. Cabell and Mr. O'Neill. So, too, have the contributors to the paper. And necessarily so. For a philosophy, after all, is simply a system of thought, based upon first principles, or axioms, by means of which those who believe in a specific philosophy seek to understand, and to explain, the mystery of life, and to guide their own actions in life—from eating, or not eating, bacon for breakfast (in Lent, let us say), to writing the "Critique of Pure Reason," or "Parsifal," or the Gospel according to Saint John. But there is no explicit philosophy common to the editors of the *American Spectator*. There are no observable first principles taken for granted by the editors collectively, by which they can shape a coherent editorial policy. I say, there is no "explicit" philosophy common to the brilliant and distinguished editors. I do not say they lack such a philosophy. Possibly, indeed, a common philosophy and the first principles of such a philosophy are really implicit in the pages of their chaotic miscellany, and could be discovered and stated in a really thorough analysis. But I am fortunately limited to 1,000 words or so in my timid expedition into the waste land anarchically ruled by these powerful princes of the modern kingdom of Chaos, and cannot undertake a real exploration.

In his generosity, the particular editor of the *American Spectator* who incited my feeble foray against this literary castle of confusion, gives me one clue to the labyrinth of the subject he assigned to me. He asks me if I think I could state the case against what is usually known as the "liberal" point of view. "It is not a question of attacking specific individuals," he writes, "but of upholding the beliefs which they do not share." "Further," he adds, "it would not be necessary to write an exhaustive essay. In as little as 800 to 1,000 words the case could be stated." True—yet only partly true. The Catholic philosophy is stated in the first few sentences of the children's catechism. All the tomes of all the Christian theologians and philosophers are only amplifications of the Creed. But how can you synthesize the "liberal" denials or derogations of the Creed? Their name is legion; but the legion is composed of contradictories: each item of the mass seeking its center in itself.

It would appear, however, that the operative word in the advice kindly offered by the *American Spectator* editor is "liberal." Let me deal with it as best I may. I agree that the philosophy of the *American Spectator* is liberal — or, rather, what is usually known as liberal. I take his word for it. But again we reach an impasse—or anyhow I do. I cannot make heads or tails, or fish or fowl or good red herring, out of the kaleidoscopic permutations of that term "liberal." If the five editors of the *American Spectator*—and the five hundred or more contemporary writers and editors who may be vaguely classified with them as "liberals"—could and would agree to state their philosophy in 1,000 words, or 100,000, and could and would reach agreement upon the fundamental dogmas (that is, statements) of their creed, then I would

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cheerfully and promptly undertake to state my own case, and "uphold the beliefs which they do not share." But the "liberals" won't do that; I am afraid the "liberals" cannot do that.

Yet if they could, and did, I am certain that even so I could not write an article intelligently (or otherwise) "representing exactly the contrary" of their "liberal" philosophy. Nor could any other Catholic—not even Thomas of Aquinas. For the philosophy which I hold (as Thomas did—only Thomas held it with the grasp of a great intellect and loved it with the ecstacy of high sanctity), being the philosophy of a Catholic, it would be impossible for it to be exactly contrary to any other philosophy—whether that of Moses or of Plato, or that of Buddha, or that of the Bhagavad-Gita, or of Confucius, or Kant, or Descartes, or Spinoza, or Hume, or (to reach our own day) of Karl Marx, or Lenin, or Freud, or Mary Baker Eddy, or Einstein, or even Aimée Semple MacPherson, or the Holy Rollers. Neither could it possibly be "exactly contrary" to that of the poets, dramatists, novelists and men of letters of the *American Spectator*. Their works, like the works, greater or lesser, of the philosophers and prophets named above, contain much truth, in greater or lesser measure, set forth in degrees of true order approximating, or eccentric to, the supreme and infallible criterion of truth—which I hold to be the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

It must seem to all "liberals" brashly arrogant, or simply silly, to say I believe that all things that are true or good in liberalism, either in literature or politics, are merely fragments or reflections or partial and distorted aspects of Catholicism—yet so I do believe, and so I think it could be proved. A modern Saint Thomas of Aquinas could supply the proof—but it would require as many folios as the original "Summa," and no "liberal" would read it. For Catholic doctrine not only expresses absolute truth—as perfectly as it may be expressed in terms comprehensible to human reason—but it exists in more than the verbal statement of its axioms: it lives; it has a body; it is an organism, not merely an organized institution, or a system; it is the Body of Christ on earth, expressing in time and space the Truth which is true eternally and without variation or shadow of change. Philosophers, poets, dramatists, novelists, critics, journalists, who are Catholics, may and do differ from each other, as well as from all "liberals," in thousands of ways, according to the differences in their gifts of genius or of talent, or their education, or their unequal opportunities; but they have in common today what their fellows have possessed in common for two thousand years, and which all Catholics will keep until the very ending of the human comedy—that which the "liberals" always lack, namely, a coherent and consistent philosophy, based upon immutable first principles, by means of which they can measure and appraise all the phenomena of life and art.

And because that is so, they cannot possibly take "exactly the contrary" position to the "liberal point of view" of the editors and writers of the *American Spectator*. The method of all men who really think must be theirs, namely, they must make distinctions. This no doubt bores the people who try to think with their emotions; but that cannot be helped—and emotional moods change and pass but reason remains the master, in the end, of all intellectual battle-fields.

So, a Catholic—or, anyhow, this particular Catholic—takes a lively and hopeful and, he trusts, a justly discriminating interest in the *American Spectator,* and all its editors and writers. He not only enjoys a great deal of their work, but heartily agrees with much of it. Other parts bore him stiff. Still other parts he considers to be poison—against which his own faith (he prays) immunizes him, but which (and this is the disastrous effect of too much "liberal" literature) weakens or degrades the minds and the souls of the sort of readers who abound today, and who supply the "liberals" with the larger part of their audience. I mean the mob of readers produced by a modern mass education unguided by religious principles, uncorrected by the traditions of Western civilization—the new barbarians, who, mentally and spiritually speaking, are mere jelly-fish for the cultivation of the morbid bacilli scattered by the "liberal" writers, many of whom are germ carriers of mental disorder and spiritual malaise.

Therefore I rejoice that so many "liberals" today, appalled by the deliquescence of all culture, and the shattering of the modern idol of materialistic and evolutionary "progress" and "liberty," are examining their consciences. And meanwhile we Catholics may well employ the Lenten season in making an examination of our own case, trying to find out why the "liberals," in this country anyhow, possess so many really first-class literary artists in all branches of letters, and the Catholics so few. But I think that the lay Catholics would probably pass the buck (or try to pass it) to the Catholic school teachers and the clergy—and these are too busy with other (and more important) matters, in Lent, to bother about the problem. Yet I think the "liberals" will in the end compel them to do so—and that is one good reason why I agree with the "liberal" philosophy of iconoclastic individualism (for that is what it is at bottom)—at least to the extent of being glad to see it freely expressed, because it may (as it should) awaken the Catholics to the needed task of expressing the true philosophy which alone can give permanent vitality to art, and a reasonable explanation of life.

P.S. The *American Spectator* rejected this article, on the ground that it is propaganda for Catholicism. Of course that is true; the whole point of my paper being to argue the thesis that Catholicism is not only a religion—the final, permanent religion of mankind—but also that this religion gives axiomatic principles to a philosophy of Catholicism, by which all damaging eccentricities of individualism and derogations of sound reason may be detected, and corrected.

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SIMPLE LIVING

By WILLIAM EVERETT CRAM

LONG years ago I read in the *St. Nicholas* a delightful narrative by one who as a boy had worked in a country store. Money was scarce in those days, so that he had to accept in payment such supplies as the store had to offer, and at each week end he had before him the interesting game of choosing from the varied list of food supplies, household utensils and farm tools, just such items as might be included within his weekly wage.

Year after year since then money has come into more general use, though never entirely displacing barter and the swapping of eggs, fruit and vegetables for groceries in the rural districts. About half way between the writing of the narrative just referred to and the present time, a farmer boy in a nearby town placed a basket of eggs on the counter and said to the storekeeper, "I want two aigs worth of candy, half a dozen aigs worth of chewing tobacco fur Dad and the rest in pastry flour." This custom had nearly died out just before the present depression set in; since then it has revived and spread with astonishing rapidity, until it is almost as common now in the farming districts as it was in the days of the early settlers.

For example, last fall I had a fat cow slaughtered and swapped a hind quarter for half a pig; the one who furnished the half pig told me that he obtained his young pigs last spring in exchange for spring lambs and had since then swapped two or three fat sheep for a flock of pullets that had just reached the laying age. A neighbor asked me the other day if I had seen the fish cart anywhere on the road. He was waiting for it; planning to buy some fish for dinner if the fisherman would take his pay in onions.

My son did some work for a farmer who could not pay in cash, so we accepted, in partial payment, apples and fire-wood which we did not really need. When the salesman or the clock repairer or the one who mends the vacuum cleaner happens along, we just say to him: "All right, go ahead if you are ready to take your pay in apples; otherwise there is absolutely nothing doing." Whether the time is actually approaching when we shall be able to pay our tax, electric light and doctor's bills in this manner is not yet certain, but the present tendency certainly points strongly in that direction. A Western editor has announced that from now on he will accept eggs in payment for subscription to his paper. Eggs are now selling for four cents a dozen on the Western farms.

Money never seems to have been entirely nonexistent in this country; before Columbus crossed the ocean, the red man had his wampum or shell money which passed back and forth between the tribes and probably fluctuated in buying value just as our currency does today. The early settlers accepted these coins carved from mussel and oyster shells, in payment from the Indians for iron arrow points and hatchets and flintlock guns; to be returned to them later in exchange for venison and fish, beaver and otter and mink skins.

At first these valuable furs were shipped to England and exchanged for tools, firearms, gunpowder and clothing, but independent self-support steadily gained headway in this country, until the time came when each settlement or community produced practically everything it needed. Wool was cleansed, spun and woven; flax was grown on the farm and its fibers woven into linen which would wear for a lifetime. Smithy and foundry were established for welding and tempering iron and steel to be hammered on the anvil into axes, scythes, sickles, crowbars and plowshares. Saltpeter and sulphur were discovered and mixed with charcoal in exact proportions on the farm to make the old-fashioned black gunpowder, and hemlock and oak bark were dried and broken to be packed layer above layer between ox hide and calf skin in the tan pit. Two years later the tanned leather was removed from the tan pit and sewed and pegged into shoes, boots and harness with flax fibers waxed with pine resin melted together with grease, and home-made hickory pegs. After that, as one generation followed another, came the movement of all industries of this class to the cities where specialized workers each did their little part of the work and passed it along to the next.

When the wide plains of the Middle West were opened up to agriculture, it was quickly proved that large-scale specialized farming is by far the most efficient, and the invention of the motor-driven tractor and reaper still further encouraged the raising of one particular crop on each farm, to be marketed wholesale and the proceeds used in buying farm and household supplies. A large majority of Middle Western farmers dispensed even with the vegetable garden, and bought all vegetables, fruit, milk and butter in the town market. But the increasing cost of all transportation steadily widened the gap between buying and selling price, until now the Western farmer receives only one-sixth of what his produce sells for in the Eastern market, and the "down east" potato grower, one-half what his potatoes sell for in the city market. According to latest farm reports, Aroostook County, Maine, where potatoes are grown on such a large scale, has suffered more during the depression than has any other portion of the Northeastern states. The average net income from the small farms of New York and New England in 1931 was $445; from the large farms of the Western states as a whole, $242; the South Atlantic, $215; and the Dakotas, Iowa and Kansas, where large-scale farming has probably outdistanced any other part of the country, a loss of $178 per farm.

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Everywhere East, West and South, the landowners appear to be reverting more and more to the old custom of raising their own supplies and rating the market as secondary; the Western corn growers even burning the corn that they cannot feed to their stock, rather than sell it at Western market price. They are also detaching motor and driving gear from truck and car and replacing them with wooden tongue and cross-tree for horse and ox power.

Here in the New England states the rivalry between progress and retrogression is still running neck and neck; while some are having their wood stoves and furnaces refitted for oil and gas, others are burning more wood and less coal than formerly. In a nearby town, families who have supported themselves of late years by factory work, and had their stoves refitted with oil burners, are now all out of work and, lacking the money with which to buy oil, are shivering with cold on farms all overgrown with woods.

For the last four years I have burned only four tons of coal each winter; running the furnace on wood most of the time and depending on fireplace and kitchen stove during mild weather. In various ways we are gradually working back toward old customs; I have a winter suit of clothes made from wool which I sheared from the backs of my own sheep when the spring weather became too warm for them to continue wearing it in comfort. Our best blankets and quilts are also made from the same source, but we cannot yet claim the distinction of having the wool cleansed, carded and woven on the farm.

Last winter I felled a pine in the pasture, sawed off twelve feet of knot-free trunk and with axe and chisel hewed out from the heart wood a watering trough for the cattle. In the pasture is a salt trough which I made in like manner when I was a boy, to replace one made by my grandfather half a century before. Some of my neighbors are abandoning the ice pond and having electric frigidaire put in for cooling milk; if the mild weather continues much longer, I may be put to the necessity of choosing between frigidaire and the old-time custom, which antedates the ice house, of lowering my milk cans down the well during the summer months.

Practically every meal from year's end to year's end, if cut down to just what was produced on the farm, would still give us satisfactory nourishment; while if reduced to what was purchased of butcher, baker, grocer and bootlegger, would be lacking both in quantity and variety.

The average native-born citizen of this country has a sincere conviction that the biggest is the best and the newest is the best, and that forward progress either upward or downward is the only worthy aim to have in view. Another typical American characteristic is lack of any inborn sense of true sportsmanship. The pot hunter's estimate of sucess or failure in the day's hunt is not unnaturally based entirely upon the quantity of game which he has succeeded in bringing down, while the sportsman gets more satisfaction from one or two successful shots when the birds are flying high before the gale, than from a dozen or a hundred on a day when conditions are more in his favor. And the same holds true along all lines of sport. We are too much inclined to estimate our success or failure on the winning or the losing of the game, without taking into account the fact that on one day we may play exceedingly well and still be outmatched, and the next time win without having played half so well.

The chase for dollars is a very exciting game, yet after enough have been won to assure the plain necessities of life, any further accumulation fails to increase the true enjoyment of them, and the true sportsman feels no sense of failure or chagrin at having lost his millions, so long as he has work in which he is interested and which can be counted on to give back those first few plain necessities. The wealthy and most expensively dressed class do not invariably display the happiest and most contented faces.

As I look back along the dim trail of the past, I recall as some of the happiest days, those spent in heavy farm work and winter wood-chopping, in fishing, hunting and tending traps in rain and fog and snow. The pioneers are sometimes spoken of with pity for the labor and privation which they had to endure, and they undeniably did have a hard time of it; yet much of their hard work was varied with fishing and hunting, which is just what the tired business man and factory worker, doctor and clerk, so eagerly look forward to enjoying during their weeks of leisure, and wind and rough weather do not as a rule deter them from making the best of it when the chance offers. Also though the pioneers may have lacked bread for nourishment, most of the time their diet included salmon and brook trout, oysters and lobsters, venison, grouse, wild turkey and wild duck—luxuries which even in the prosperous days the majority of us could but occasionally afford.

The satisfaction of having accomplished a difficult task, even though the financial returns from it are small, is something well worth striving for.

As I sit here at my desk on this windy March afternoon, I am conscious of an undercurrent of desire to get my writing finished for the time and to go out to my routine barn work of watering cows, sheep and horse, doing the milking, pitching down hay from the scaffold for their supper, and making things comfortable for them for the night. Net returns in cash for this work may be reckoned at five or six cents an hour, and if that was all there was to it, it would be hardly worth the while; but as financial conditions stand today the country over, the small-scale farmer has the advantage over pretty nearly every other class, in having something substantial to fall back upon.

Farm work is a gamble, for no one can foretell the weather from planting to harvest. Hence the man who stakes his all on one crop may win or lose all; but he who has several crops, though he count some loss, may confidently expect also some gain.

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JOHN GALSWORTHY

By JAMES W. LANE

GALSWORTHY is dead. The man who has described nearly four generations of English society, with a particular sympathy for the underdog and a particular satire for the man of business, has passed, just after his last novel, "Flowering Wilderness," had been published, and he fittingly crowned with the Nobel Prize for 1932.

While John Galsworthy never seemed to have any definite or deep-seated religious creed, he had an inveterate passion for taking up the cudgels for the weak and the downtrodden, as is shown in most of his plays and two novels in particular, "The Island Pharisees" and "Fraternity." He was a born writer and an artist to his finger tips. His graceful, rich and at the same time austere prose was corrected and corrected with much labor until he beat out the lucidity he sought, following in the footsteps (so he said) of Frenchmen like Maupassant and of Russians like Turgenev.

He is most famous for his "Forsyte Saga," but I think as a novelist he has been overrated, and I like him best as a playwright, a short-story writer, and an essayist. The prefaces, for instance, that he has written for the later complete editions of his works, prefaces dealing with the art of literature and of the novel, are masterly. His stories, collected in "Caravan," are neat, climactic, and wrought at a white heat. Only here and there is the deep feeling in them tinged with sentimentalism. He is a finished playwright. The English put Galsworthy cycles on their stages every now and then. I have thus witnessed quite a few of his plays. Out of an embarrassment of riches I would select, as the best, "The Silver Box," "Loyalties" (which I have seen in three world capitals), "Justice," "The Pigeon," "Windows," "Old English" and "Escape." All of these are exciting. They pose a problem in the most stimulating terms, give both sides, are thoughtful, possess excellent dialogue, crisp and to the point, are salted with the wisdom of beauty, avoid sententiousness, and have touching conclusions.

I visited Galsworthy once in his home at Hampstead, where he died. I felt particularly shy because a week or two before I had spent most of the afternoon and early evening trying to find the house. I had walked through Camden Town all the way to Hampstead Park (which was in the opposite direction!), ringing various door-bells without success. The second time I went happened to be just after the first night of "Loyalties," and, as I say, I was shy and excited.

Hampstead ten years ago (I do not know what it is like today) was one of those sections fashionable in the early years of the century, but since deserted and falling to heel. With a certain poetic justice the writer of "To Let," which had then lately appeared, was surrounded with To Let signs on all sides. Perhaps that gave him his title or his idea. His house reminded me of the description of the house Scrooge dwelt in—it seemed to have run away when it was young, playing hide-and-seek with other houses, and had forgotten its way home again. Its playmates are Victorian; it is Elizabethan.

It has a very low roof, hence the ceilings are low. I remember the low-ceilinged, large, rambling parlor into which I was ushered. There I met Mrs. Galsworthy and several friends. The playwright was having a talk with Basil Dean, his producer, going over the lighting effects, etc., of the *première*. In the first scene of Act I, for instance, the lighting had been too garish. I had attended the play, to write it up for one of the Cambridge undergraduate weeklies, but I had been too plot-enthralled to notice this.

Mr. Galsworthy soon came in. Discovering that I was an American, he asked me what I thought of Santayana's impressions of the American university in "Character and Opinion in the United States." I mumbled some stumbling phrases and he spoke, quite to the point, of Santayana's involved style. To everything I said he was most attentive, for he was one of the most courteous listeners I have ever met.

He was a man of culture and reserve. His aristocratic dignity and quiet charm at once made themselves felt, but only when you saw him seated opposite, staring you through with those piercing eyes under a sheer, craglike forehead, did you perhaps realize that creative fires smoldered in this thinker. As a young man, he was destined to the bar, but revolted. He determined to write, although he was perhaps the only person at Oxford who suspected he could do so. His early novels were not successful, but he hit his true stride in "The Patrician," "Fraternity" and "The Man of Property." In those three novels and in "The Forsyte Saga" (of which "The Man of Property" forms the first part) and also in "The Country House," he judged with unforgettable accuracy the qualities of English upper middle-class life. The world was not slow then to pay heed to him whose plays also, beginning with "The Silver Box" in 1906, had been pouring from the presses.

He had gained the front rank of living authors. Germany gave his plays and translated his novels. André Chevrillon in France wrote a studious recognition of his worth. For "The Forsyte Saga," featuring mainly the propertied and sophisticated class, he has been compared to Balzac, and the comparison is just. "A Modern Comedy," comprising the further fortunes of the Forsytes under "The White Monkey," "The Silver Spoon" and "Swan Song," I do not find so enthralling. The plots are well-wrought, if a trifle artificial, but the style, though clear, appears hasty and staccato. If it was consciously fabricated to echo the tempo of modern life, it but proves the more a fact about Galsworthy. It proves that he tried to get into the spirit of the age we live in, but failed. The characters in his five last novels lack the full-bodied substance of his earlier creations. Modernism Galsworthy never liked—and one feels it. He is for the past, with its old gentlemen living in the rarefied air of leisure, solitude, gossip or good conversation at the club and being served expensive and admirable dinners (which he describes uncannily well) by the old family retainer at home. One feels that his sentimental attachment to old-timers, to Jolyon, Swithin, Aunts Juley and Hester, Timothy, and even (in "A Modern Comedy") to Soames, is sincere.

He was for quality in life as against quantity. He satirized all prostituting of the beautiful to the commercial, all profiteering. He wrote charmingly and virilely of love at first sight, as the idyll between Jon and Fleur suggests. He was an adept, too, at poeticizing the sleek shine and the high-stepping grace of race-horses, and he knew the spirit of the turf, what grooms would say and bookies do. His love of dogs was perhaps equal to his love of horses, as attested in the dogs he wrote about—the black spaniel, Fleur's Pekinese, and old Balthasar, the Pom.

Galsworthy had a great heart. "Let me do some good deed where I can, I shall not pass this way again," was an earmark of that immense kindness of which members of his family speak. He had also a critical gift. He early appreciated Conrad, W. H. Hudson, Edward Garnett and other writers whose sense for truth and beauty, though different in aspect, was as poignant as his own. His books abound in a fresh atmospheric beauty, often almost ethereally described. With strict honesty and appealing simplicity, his pen created a living art, for which the England he loved so well is the better.

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THE PENAL SYSTEM IN AMERICA

By F. JOSEPH KELLY

BECAUSE of the many outbreaks in our penal institutions during the last few years, it is well to call attention to the penal system as it obtains in our country at the present time.

The theory of expiation is defective in this, that expiation is a purely moral act, and belongs to the forum of conscience alone. Necessity or expedience, which seeks for the right of punishment in the effect of the punishment alone, without regard to the offender, affords neither a right to punish, nor a standard of application of suffering. Somewhat similar to this is the theory of deterring—establishing examples—the prevention of criminal action in some by exhibiting to them the suffering which it has brought upon others. This, in the first place, does not answer the question, whence do we derive the right to punish? Moreover we have no right to make use of one human being as an instrument simply, to make him suffer solely for the benefit of others. Besides the theory does not give us a just standard of punishment; because the legislator would be bound to affix the several penalties, not to those crimes which are most atrocious, but to those which men were most strongly tempted to commit. The theory of special prevention, or of depriving the criminal of the power of committing the same offense the second time, settles no principles and admits of no scale of punishment; because the means of effectual prevention must be always the same, death or imprisonment for life.

Some found the right of punishment in the theory of warning—in the right which the state has to warn everyone not to disturb its order, by fixing beforehand a penalty for every offense. This however begs the question, for when we are asked to grant the truth, that the state has a right to warn its citizens, we either understand by warning, simply and strictly warning, or warning with the right of executing the threatened penalty in case of contravention. If we mean the first, we grant nothing, and no right of punishment can be deduced from our concession; if we mean the second, we grant the very thing to be proved, namely the right of punishment. Besides it is defective in affording no standard of punishment. The theory which rests the right of punishment upon a civil contract, by which society punishes offenses of so many breaches of the contract entered into between it and the individual members composing it, is invalidated by two objections: in the first place, that there is no contract in point of fact; and, in the second place, if the contract were granted, we have not yet proved the right which the contracting parties had of making it.

Many philanthropists have asserted that the only legitimate object of punishment, and therefore the only ground on which we can found the right of punishing, is the correction or reform of the convict. Although the reform of the criminal enters largely into every penal theory, it is far from affording us the right of punishment. The moral correction of the citizens, as such, is not one of the obligations of the state. Various other objections may be urged against it, on theoretical grounds; and in practice, it is next to impossible to decide, with any degree of satisfactory probability, whether reform in any given case is real or pretended.

Retaliation as the sole basis and object of punishment admits of nearly the same objections to which expiation is liable; and it becomes the more objectionable, the more it approaches to revenge. Retaliation and revenge as the object of punishment belong to those early stages of society when the state has not yet severed itself from the family, and personal wrongs are taken to be family wrongs. From this arises the system of compensation, by which offenses are estimated in certain rates of money to be paid by the offending to the offended party. The first step in the progress of penal law is to have these compensations assessed by a judge with power to punish, in default of payment.

Some distinguished philosophers have maintained that punishment is merely retribution, and that civil punition is inflicted for the sake of justice, and for no other reason. This opinion rests upon a confusion of sin, or offense against the moral law, with crime, or offense against the state. The theory moreover leaves unanswered the question, why should a man be punished for the sake of justice? The theory which establishes the right to punish from the principle of self-defense, originally vested in the individual, and subsequently in the state, would lead to the merest expediency; for self-defense or self-preservation places all means at our disposal, and leaves it to our own will to make the selection.

What is the object of punishment? The first object of the state is the protection or security of its members; and this security is twofold, material and intellectual, direct or indirect. Direct security is positive protection against direct wrong; indirect security is that security which results from the maintenance of that general state of society without which its ends cannot be obtained. The true standard of punishment therefore is the danger, material or intellectual, to society, and the effect that punishment has on society or the punished individual himself.

Disproportionate punishments are objectionable on two accounts: because they are unjust, and consequently opposed to the idea of justice on which the state is founded, and because the effect of the punishment is destroyed.

Reciprocity, on the ground of equality, being the principle of the right of punishment, immorality becomes punishable when and because it interferes with the rights of others. A committed wrong is not only the material wrong done to our neighbor, but the moral wrong of interference with the rights of others. It is on this ground that the state has the right to punish excessive cruelty to animals, for no legal offense against the animal itself can be committed; if the cruelty be committed publicly, it is an offense against the rights of those who see it, and it is no answer to say that the animal belongs to his tormentor, for no man has the right to do wrong even to his own.

Those who consider uninterrupted solitude of primary importance in the punishment for crime give the following reasons: (1) It effectually prevents contamination, and it alone can effectually prevent it. It allows therefore the offender, at any rate, not to grow worse. (2) It is essentially both a stern and humane punishment, because solitude is stern in its character, and because it is a privation rather than an infliction it is humane. It is mild and acknowledged as such by the offenders themselves. (3) It is gradable and accommodable, as no other species of punishment. The offender undisturbed by others, or by new inflictions of punishment, receives from solitude just that impression which his peculiar case or disposition calls for or is capable of. (4) Advice and exhortation can be adapted to each single case in no other punishment so precisely and justly, like moral medicine, as in solitary confinement. (5) Solitude is the weightiest moral agent to make the thoughtless thoughtful, to make them reflect, and the only one sufficiently powerful for the criminally thoughtless. (6) It is the only punishment known which does not irritate anew, does not chal-

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lenge opposition in mind or body; for it is the only punishment which can dispense with other means of coercing obedience. (7) It makes the lonely prisoner love labor as faithfully as the dearest companion, a companion who will be with him for life. (8) It does not deaden shame by exposure; on the contrary, it shames into repentance by its absence of all harshness. (9) It does not expose the convict to acquaintance with other criminals, who out of the prison form a very compact fraternity, to escape from the clutches of which forms the most difficult obstacle in the way of resuming an honest life. (10) It contradicts the belief of the convict that society is at war with him. (11) It touches the man in the convict and not the brute. (12) It offers the greatest security, being in this superior to all other kinds of imprisonment.

The disadvantages of uninterrupted solitude and labor are not of a moral or essential character, but merely accidental, and consist principally in greater expense in building the prison, and in the fact that many profitable species of labor cannot be pursued, because they cannot be carried on within doors and because they require joint labor. But prisons are not erected to make money, but to punish and if possible to reform by punishment, and no pecuniary considerations should be allowed to interfere with this purpose. The objections that we have no right to condemn a human being to uninterrupted solitude, that it is a violation of the law of God, that solitude drives men to despair, lose their weight when we consider the advantages to the individual.

Considering the failure of our prison system here in the United States, and the many serious outbreaks, would it not be well to investigate a treatment of convicts different from that which we have meted out to them?

Were I a Dog of God

I would I were a dog of God,
So faithful as my dog to me:
Alert for every beck and nod,
And labor's ecstasy.

What if I had for God's behest
So constantly the ear and eye,
With mind and heart in tireless quest
Of duty's steady cry.

Ah, when the master is away,
What loneliness surrounds the space:
So should I mourn the night and day
That seem to cloud God's face.

What voiced delights again resound,
The homeward-coming call to hear:
How should my heart in joys abound
When God again comes near.

Much have I scanned prayer's catalogue,
And leagues of humble hope have trod:
For these my thanks, and the faithful dog
That brought me nearer God.

God bless all faithful gentlemen,
And lead us high from low degree,
Through all the ages now: and then—
In sempiternity.

MICHAEL EARLS.

COMMUNICATIONS

WORK FOR THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Denver, Colo.

TO the Editor: The letter of Parochus in your issue of March 15 would indicate that the author is unfamiliar with the existing national undertakings of the Knights of Columbus in behalf of the Church and the country. He asserts that since our war and post-war work the "Knights of Columbus have had little of great national work to do, and by this time, their armor must be getting rusty," and that our "only activities at present do not reach beyond parish limits." A severe indictment if the allegations are true. The remedy suggested by the earnest Parochus is that we polish up our armor and move our half-million Catholic men into the highways under orders of our captain, the Supreme Knight, and become census takers, contacting fallen-away Catholics, seeking converts and discovering "the extent of leakage and the causes of irreligion." The ordinary and his pastors have charge of the census. Local Knights assist. Local councils of the order, in this action at least, have brought back hundreds of fallen away Catholics to the Church. The writer has advocated the formation of Catholic Evidence Guilds and the participation of Knights therein. These partly religious movements cannot be nationalized under the direction of a lay organization.

Now, about the rusty armor. Is the order engaged in any worth-while national work? Immediately after the war it organized its great American Historical Movement, praised alike by statesmen, educators, historians and patriotic citizens. While this work was ended some years ago, it is continuous in the sense that it is supplemented by annual prize essay contests for junior and senior students in all public and parochial high schools, with national and district prizes, upon patriotic and historical subjects. This is now in the eighth year and will continue from year to year. It will make the boy and girl of today the better citizens of tomorrow.

Again, the order is conducting a great correspondence school attended by thousands of Catholic men and women, young and old, who desire to better equip themselves in the battle of life by taking one or more of the eighty odd courses of study open to them. This has been in operation for several years and will probably continue for many years to come.

Is the order doing anything for the Catholic youth of the land? The boy problem is the problem of the age. It has founded the new science of boyology. It is and has been for many years training men for boy work. Through this work and its Columbian Squires it is transposing the boy into a future stalwart Catholic man and a good citizen.

Its Roman work is another example of heroic effort to save the youth of Italy to the Church at the request of Pope Benedict. It is controlling this work through its own representative at Rome and disburses the income of its million-dollar foundation in carrying on the work. This is enduring and continuous and highly lauded by the Holy Father, cardinals, bishops, priests and visitors who have inspected it.

Few Catholic men outside the hierarchy and clergy are university trained men. We lack dominant lay leadership among our twenty million Catholics. The order has undertaken to give fifty Catholic men annually free four-year university courses at the Catholic University at Washington. True, this was inaugurated before the war, but it is a continuous national movement and will add glory and prestige to the Church, ever increasing as the years and generations roll by, as predicted to the writer by the late Bishop Shahan.

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"Parish limits." Yes, study groups, Catholic Action, social justice, the encyclicals. This work is carried on through many local councils under the direction of the bishop of each diocese. It is earnestly hoped that it will spread among all the councils. It is purely local and not under the national direction of the order. The order is always meticulous to avoid trenching upon ecclesiastical authority.

You may feel sure that the Knights of Columbus will promptly grasp any worth-while national opportunity that knocks at its door in the future as in the past. As your correspondent admits, the order has brains in its directing forces, its Supreme Council, directors and officers, and there need be no fear on the part of Parochus or pessimist that it is in process of decay after fifty years of glorious achievement for God, Church and Country.

JOHN H. REDDIN.

THE TRIALS OF A DEBTOR

Providence, R. I.

TO the Editor: "Our whole system of interest taking, as allowed by the states, is wrong. Money does not fructify, is the Catholic principle. It does so only through labor. But not all labor can be confiscated in its favor. Our capitalists have reaped long ago all they had coming to them. If now their investment is cut down half, and their interest likewise, they are even then getting much more than they gave or are entitled to reap."

When Reverend U. F. Mueller, C.PP.S., shoots these six staccato sentences, he exhibits a thorough knowledge of economics, which of course means Catholic economics. The illustration that he gives in his communication in THE COMMONWEAL for February 22, that 6 percent interest enables the capitalist to take one-fourth of the product, ought to call Catholic attention to the prevalence of usury. Money is borrowed by industry in order to secure product; when industry has to pass over to the capitalists one-fourth of the product, the real rate of interest is 25 percent. Yet, Catholic economists generally reserve the word "usury" for 8 percent interest (or more), at which rate 33 percent of the product would go to capitalists. This is because the value of capital is about four times the value of the annual product; thus, a 5 percent rate of interest on capital means that capital has a standing claim to 20 percent of the annual product.

The occasion of Father Mueller's communication was "The Trials of a Debtor," by Ernest F. DuBrul, and he seems to think that Mr. DuBrul holds that interest should be maintained somewhere around 5 or 6 percent at the present time, but let me assure Father Mueller that he is mistaken. Because the writer, after reading Father Mueller's criticism, read Mr. DuBrul's article and particularly noted the statement: "Production capacity as well as goods are produced in excess of profitable sale, with the proceeds of credit." In other words, Mr. DuBrul holds that there is a superabundance of industrial capital.

It happens that back in 1921 and 1922 the writer was the cause of extended discussion of the interest question in *America*, in which Mr. DuBrul participated, and in *America* for February 4, 1922, in a communication signed "E. F. DuBrul, Cincinnati," appeared the following: "To our minds it is the limited amount of capital available compared to the demand, regardless of how many owners control that amount, and, for that matter, regardless of how many borrowers are bidding for the use of that amount, that gives rise to interest."

Although Mr. DuBrul's letter was supposed to be a severe criticism of the writer's view, his conclusion was the very point that the writer was at that time trying to make and still maintains, and had maintained for many years prior thereto. Of course, Mr. DuBrul has not changed his correct view as to what gives rise to interest, and he therefore must agree with Father Mueller, that "if now their [capitalists'] investment is cut down half, and their interest likewise, they are even then getting much more than they gave or are entitled to reap."

In this connection it ought to be recorded that neither Pope Leo nor Pope Pius maintains the rightfulness of any interest. It is true that the Church has permitted interest on money on the theory that capital is now "productive." The word "productive" needs to be interpreted in the light of its meaning at the time the Church lifted the ban on interest. As Dr. John A. Ryan pointed out in the discussion in *America* more than ten years ago, interest can only come from increased value of the product; but productivity does not increase value, it lessens value. And, further, in the chapter on interest in "A Living Wage," Father Ryan in a footnote says, "No explanation is attempted of the fact that the product will have a value sufficiently large to cover interest."

It is true that "relative" productiveness increases the total value of the product of "relatively" efficient capital, but that is no explanation for interest being impressed on all capital in use, the same rate of interest applying to the least productive as to the most productive.

The interest question is one for the serious consideration of Catholic Action.

M. P. CONNERY.

A CATHOLIC CIRCULATING LIBRARY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Being none too blessed with this world's goods, I am unable to spend very much money on books, in fact, hardly any, and as a result, I am forced to patronize the circulating library. This is satisfactory when it comes to detective stories, of which I read a great many, but when I go high-brow, even in a small way, it doesn't turn out so well. I am wondering therefore if there is such a thing as a Catholic Circulating Library. I don't mean a library devoted only to treatises on the state of the soul, or anything else above most people's heads, but a library wherein one can get a book that isn't labeled "best seller."

I can only imagine a library that would supply biographies, essays, etc., such as appear on the Cardinal's White List, to be run under Catholic auspices, and so I hope one of your readers can show me the path to a "good" circulating library.

This outburst was caused by being told that "Charles Carroll of Carrollton" was not in the library as it might not be in "sufficient demand."

HELEN READY BIRD.

Editorial Note: This correspondent has well expressed a great and crying need. We heartily recommend her suggestion to our Catholic societies who are seeking a really effective mode of Catholic Action. While other religious bodies—in particular the Christian Science Church—provide well-equipped reading rooms and libraries throughout the country, there are no properly equipped Catholic reading rooms or libraries available either for Catholics or the non-Catholic public in most of our towns and cities.

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THE CHURCH AND CRIME

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editor: In the issue of February 1, I notice a letter entitled "The Church and Crime," in which Reverend Charles J. Callan, O.P., expresses his views and reasons why so large a number of Catholics are lodged in prisons.

May I, as a student of crime and procedure, and as a Catholic, voice my humble opinion upon this matter?

Today, unfortunately, crime is not a question of guilt or innocence. It is a question of being caught and, having been caught, the innocence depends largely upon the amount of money that can be put up for the defense of the accused. In other words, it has resolved itself into a "Put up or shut up" affair. If a Catholic has the money to defend his honor, then he is well armed; if he is poor (which is more often the case), his defense is weak and fruitless, even though he be as innocent as a new-born babe.

In America, it is assumed that a person is innocent until proven guilty. I am sorry to say this does not hold good in Catholic circles, for the moment one of their number is charged with even the slightest misdemeanor, he is deserted by his Catholic friends who flee from him in much the same manner as rodents flee from a ship about to sink. The poor outcast is left to the mercy (?) of the enemy, forsaken by those to whom he should be able to look for consolation and assistance.

Contrariwise, let us consider our friends, the Jews. Let any Jew be charged with any crime from murder down to a common street brawl, and immediately his friends unite in a solid front to defend him. If the individual is minus the necessary lucre to establish his innocence, his friends will take up a collection for his support. This explains why so few Jews are tenants of our jails, although I believe their number as law violators greatly exceeds that of the Catholics.

In voicing this opinion, I do not assume to have the theoretical knowledge of Father Callan, but my conclusion is arrived at as the result of several years of keen observation and practical knowledge of what transpires within the purprise of our Criminal Courts.

Catholics must stand together in material things equally as well as they do spiritually. They must know that, in the eyes of non-Catholics, ever ready to generalize where Catholics are concerned, an indictment against a Catholic is an indictment against the Faith itself and cited as such with glee. Catholics should know that numbers of perfectly innocent Catholics are wrongfully imprisoned or publicly disgraced, simply because they lacked funds to help themselves, and were deserted in their hour of need by their Catholic brethren. Everything reverts to the dollar mark, and crime is no stranger to the rule.

ADA A. CHRISTIE.

THE MARTYRED QUEEN

Providence, R. I.

TO the Editor: In the current number of THE COMMONWEAL, on page 554, there is a review by Mr. Thomas F. Healy of the book, "Marie Antoinette."

In this review Mr. Healy alludes to Louis XVI as "an exaggerated replica of his father (Louis XV)." Now Louis XVI was the son of Louis the Dauphin who died in 1765, while the latter's father (Louis XV) survived until 1774. Consequently, Louis XVI was not the son of Louis XV but his grandson.

I have always enjoyed THE COMMONWEAL since its inception long ago.

F. H. ANTHONY.

PONDERINGS OF A PH.D.

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: A word, if you please, with Kevin, the ponderer. His name is legion. The one irreparable mistake we Kevins have made was in not knowing the "ablauts and umlauts" before signing on the dotted line. Getting a Ph.D. is a delightful experience—if you have the "background." And what now is the background? Everything. "All knowledge bring, ye who enter here" is inscribed over the gate, but the inscription is not in any modern language and you learn to decipher it only gradually.

Shame to the modern utilitarian who comes athirst for the knowledge he needs as a "background for future writing," or future teaching, or future preaching. "Research" is the *raison d'être* of the university. Pushing back the frontiers of knowledge, adding to our cultural heritage a neat pile of cards listing the uses of the ablative in Saint Ambrose; or hours of thrilling discovery with a calculating machine that gives the exact correlation and probable error between the waistline and the appetite, or days and weeks of patient digging to unearth the clayey remains of Dewey's long-dead (and somewhat smelly) theories of education.

Kevin, you, I fear, are a low-brow. Go back to your bishop, or to your superior, or perhaps to the paterfamilias, and confess that the air here is too rarefied. I'm going, too.

KATHLEEN O'TOOLE.

THE READY ANSWER

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: We were very pleased to read your recent endorsement (long delayed) of the Catholic Evidence Guild movement in this country. Like the guilds in Baltimore, Oklahoma City and New York, we have been engaged, for more than a year, in intensive preparation for this charitable work.

In this city, in addition to speaking in jails, hospitals and study clubs, ten licensed speakers conduct two open-air pitches and one radio program every Sunday afternoon. Guilds have recently been formed in New Bedford, Massachusetts; Union City, New Jersey, and possibly in other cities of which we have no record.

We extend a cordial invitation to all Catholics to join this nation-wide movement. In the truest sense it is the Gospel in Action. If you won't join, at least remember us with a prayer.

JOHN J. O'CONNOR, *Secretary,*
Catholic Evidence Guild of Washington, D. C.

QUESTIONS OF SCIENCE

San Antonio, Tex.

TO the Editor: I got a tremendous kick out of Father Bick's letter on the sappy way we papists talk about scientists. I have only grown out of it in recent years, so this is self-criticism mainly and a public act of contrition. You ought to put a brake, too, on your editorial mention of Einstein, in my opinion. Brother Paulen of the Society of Mary in a recent lecture paid a high compliment to his honesty as a scientist, and it's none of our business what he does as a human creature. Why should you and I be throwing stones at anybody? I myself have so many difficulties in being decently charitable, and am so far away from what I should be in that respect, that I can't think that any but the saints should be permitted to exercise the extremely dangerous virtue of justice.

W. D. POWERS.

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THE PLAY

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

The Cherry Orchard

SUMMONING all possible courage, I must admit, guiltily, that until a few days ago, I had never seen Eva Le Gallienne's quite famous production of "The Cherry Orchard." It is only recently, to be sure, that she has reintroduced it as a companion piece to "Alice in Wonderland." But it is a play that she gave repeatedly in the old stronghold on 14th Street, and one that most certainly deserved comment in this column long ago. For it ranks among the very best of the Le Gallienne productions.

For the benefit of readers who do not follow the Broadway gossip columns, I might say that the old Civic Repertory has been temporarily abandoned. The old 14th Street theatre with its very low prices and strenuous repertory production schedule was never a money-making enterprise. It depended year by year upon the added support of generous friends. In this particular year of hardship, a large midwinter contribution which had been counted upon failed to materialize. But Miss Le Gallienne, nothing daunted, at once made up her mind to abandon repertory for the sake of continuing repertory—an apparent paradox only, since the plan involved taking her outstanding success of the season, "Alice in Wonderland," to the large uptown spaces of the New Amsterdam Theatre. It was a way of keeping the company together, also a way (possibly) of earning enough money to provide a fund for next year's regular repertory program.

As matters turned out, the repertory idea for this year was destined not to die entirely. "The Cherry Orchard" was added to the New Amsterdam program, with Alla Nazimova, playing Madame Ranevsky, as the bright particular star of the occasion. The dear, delightful "Alice" now continues to pack the house in the closing days of each week, and "The Cherry Orchard" draws the first of the week audiences.

"The Cherry Orchard" is obviously one of Chekov's best plays. It is also an extremely difficult play to produce well. It requires thoroughly atmospheric settings, for the simple reason that the love of the dingy old house and its surrounding acres of orchards motivates most of the characters. It must catch, too, without being too obvious in the process, that subtle feeling of an era of profound change in national life. The play concerns that period, a generation after the liberation of the serfs in Russia, when the old landed aristocracy was slowly dying out through inaction and boredom, and when the impulse to change and industrialization was first being strongly felt, particularly among the newly rich descendants of the serfs. It might roughly be compared to the generation following the Civil War in our own South—except that in Russia this period also contained the seeds of the Communist philosophy. Without a rich understanding of the spirit of the particular day, "The Cherry Orchard" would fail miserably as an interesting production. Miss Le Gallienne and her company have given it just the loving care it needs, and provided it with a grace and inner beauty which is as much visual as it is of words or actions. Madame Nazimova, Josephine Hutchinson and Miss Le Gallienne make an unforgettable trio as the mother, daughter and stepdaughter respectively. Whether they are laughing or crying or brooding in sorrow at being forced to give up the home and its orchard, they move throughout each scene with a tender understanding and a complete mastery of subtle, unspoken feeling. (At the New Amsterdam Theatre.)

More Shakespeare Repertory

I SPOKE last week of an excellent if quite unpretentious performance of "Macbeth" at the theatre where Percival Vivian is doggedly pursuing his purpose of building up a permanent Shakespeare repertory company. I said that it was good Shakespeare simply because it was simple and forthright Shakespeare. The same comment holds true of the company's production of "Hamlet," but in a lesser degree.

There are disadvantages as well as distinct advantages in using non-Shakespearean actors for some of the leading rôles. Curtis Cooksey, for example, strikes a note of utter sincerity in his acting which is rarely to be found among the traditional Shakespeare actors. But on occasions, Mr. Cooksey lets feeling run away with him. In his impatience to get at the heart of his lines, he pours forth his words in a torrent and blurs their meaning, except at obvious climaxes. This is much more noticeable in his Hamlet than in his Macbeth. Nevertheless he plays a strong, vigorous Hamlet, one whose sense of humor and surrounding realities never forsakes him, essentially the heroic Hamlet rather than the indecisive neurotic. This, in itself, is excellent.

Mr. Vivian's production of "Hamlet," taken as a whole, is far more scattered and uneven than his "Macbeth." The traditional essentials are well planned, but many minor points necessary to maintaining the story and illusion are either omitted or handled too carelessly. The scene of the king at prayer, a necessary explanation of Hamlet's delay, is omitted entirely. In the closet scene with the Queen, after the killing of Polonius, both Hamlet and the Queen act as if there were no such thing as the corpse of an old family retainer lying practically at their feet. There is hardly a line or gesture to show their consciousness of the unintentional tragedy. These are but two examples of a carelessness which mars some otherwise splendidly honest work. (At the Shakespeare Theatre.)

THE MAGNIFICENT work being accomplished both for the Church and for music in general by the Pius X School of Liturgical Music was again splendidly manifested at the recent concert of its choir in Town Hall, the auditorium being practically filled by an audience which was by no means altogether Catholic. And the interest and enthusiasm of the audience was worthy of the singing of the choir. No such singing of Gregorian and kindred music can be found anywhere else in America as is in the concerts of the Pius X Choir, and attendance at them ought to be a part of every music-lover's education, whether that music-lover be Catholic, Protestant or Jew. Here in the College of the Sacred Heart is a school dedicated to the severest standards in liturgical music, standards which have practically vanished from the churches, though in America vanished is not the word, for they never existed; and its public concerts are examples of singing and of compositions which should be the rule in every important Catholic church in the land. The response of the critics of the non-Catholic daily press to these concerts has been enthusiastic and unanimous, and it is the duty of the Catholic press certainly to insist on the ideals in liturgical music promulgated by Pius X and splendidly carried out at the Sacred Heart by Mother Stevens and her able coadjutors. To quote the words of the critic of the New York *Times,* words written the day after the Town Hall concert: "Why, one asks, are these works so seldom performed in the cathedral, in the church? They are its greatest musical heritage." It is to make such performances possible that the Pius X School exists.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

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BOOKS

Henry's Henchman

The Three Pelicans: Archbishop Cranmer and the Tudor Juggernaut, by Arthur Styron. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $4.00.

HENRY VIII in a fit of playful exuberance ordered Cranmer to take as the device for his seal three pelicans instead of three cranes, in sign of his willingness to shed his blood for his religion: hence the name of the book. It is in the three-dimensional style of biography. Depth is secured by allowing imagination to supplement the historical categories of time and place, and, thus, the author gains access to the mind and thoughts of his subject and is enabled to set down speeches and soliloquies that are not always reported by the chroniclers. The result, though described as imaginative biography on the publishers' wrapper, is not, in the main, a distorted or unfaithful portrait of Henry's enigmatic and powerful Primate.

Coming so soon after Belloc's "Cranmer" comparisons are inevitable. Styron makes no reference to Belloc either in the text or in the bibliography, but it is striking how closely the thoughts and estimates of the two writers run parallel. Belloc has neither sympathy nor admiration for Cranmer except as a writer of English prose and prayers. Styron finds in him nothing to admire and is apparently less deeply impressed by his services to English letters. Both books seem to be an expression of a desire, which is becoming more general year by year, to gain a closer acquaintance with the men who brought about the religious revolution of the sixteenth century through which modern civilization reached its present impasse. Cranmer, as an agent in the English movement, fares no better in the pages of Styron than he does in those of Belloc.

The problem for a biographer of Cranmer is to explain how a man with such limitations of character and such meager attainments could have played a dominating rôle in the Tudor transformation of England. In all likelihood he would never have risen to prominence were it not that nature seemed to have fashioned him as a tool for the hands of Henry VIII. A self-indulgent and vacillating ruler and an unscrupulous and timid ecclesiastic united in common purposes were a tremendous power for evil and disorder. Such a combination enabled each to gratify his ruling passions: lust and power in the case of Henry; hatred of the Church and unbridled ambition in the case of Cranmer. Henry found in Cranmer the instrument to give some show of legality to his repudiation of Catherine and to justify his subsequent evil deeds. Having entered on his career as keeper of the king's conscience, Cranmer had to play his shameful rôle to the end.

Styron gives the picture of a man whose weakness was his strength. Hated and reviled by the successive groups who enjoyed Henry's favor, Cranmer saw queens and favorites discarded or led to the scaffold, while he, by consummate skill in the arts of servility and obsequiousness, managed to keep his head on his shoulders. Throughout the pages of this long memoir, filled with the evidence of Cranmer's ingratitude, perfidy, betrayal of friends, deceit, cruelty and cowardice, the author pitilessly unfolds the base and pitiful career of the man who held the highest post in the church he was so largely instrumental in establishing. His defiant show of manliness on the pyre, when all hope of escape was gone, might, if it had come at an earlier period, have saved his memory from perpetual obliquy.

Throughout the work the aim of the author has been to accentuate movements rather than particular happenings. His observations on the character of the men and the period and his opinions of the social and political implications of the Protestant movement in England are entirely free from bias but not of the kind to meet with the approval of all classes of readers. With few exceptions the figures that pass across his pages are low and base in the extreme, but they serve to accentuate the magnitude of the social and religious changes of which they were the instruments. The author is at his best in his reflective moods, and some of his paragraphs exhibit an unusual understanding of the changes implied in the revolution by which England became Anglican and nationalistic. One typical passage is that referring to the oath Cranmer had Edward VI take at his coronation.

The work is marred in places by critical and historical inaccuracies and by some slight typographical errors. It is not quite in accordance with fact to refer to the curriculum at Cambridge in Cranmer's student-days as if it consisted merely of the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium,* to speak of Cranmer's seeing the great Gothic dome of St. Paul's (Wren's dome) on his first trip from Westminister to Greenwich, to call the pallium a short cape, to refer to the impediment of consanguinity as among the causes of Henry's scruples. Even Cranmer would have winced, if, at his consecration the officiating bishop said, "Introibo ad *altarem* Dei," and More would have occasion for mirth even in the tower if the Duke of Norfolk tried to impress him with the phrase, "Indignatio principio mors est." Such trifling slips do not, however, detract from the general excellence of the work, and do not diminish in the least the significance of the author's opinion of Cranmer's supine subserviency and criminal complicity in the work of destroying the Church in England. This book is likely to be the tomb of Cranmer's reputation.

PATRICK J. HEALY.

A Masterly Novel

A Watch in the Night, by Helen C. White. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.

A NOVELIST of first-class importance, her first story a work of high value, Helen C. White, in "A Watch in the Night," recalls such great names as Sigrid Undset and Willa Cather to the mind of a reviewer attempting the difficult task of appraising the many values of her splendid tale. It is not because she resembles the Norwegian novelist, or the American novelist, imitatively, for her originality is unquestionable; but she does display, in her own fashion, something of the frank, strong realism combined with mystical intuitiveness that Sigrid Undset so uniquely displays, with more than a small share of that power of almost musical evocation of the beauty and mystery of human life merging into the deeper mystery of divine life, which is the distinctive gift of Willa Cather.

The task of reviewing her novel, then, is, as I have said above, a difficult one, although reading the glowing, powerful, yet exquisitely tender chronicle of the love-life of Jacopone da Todi is almost too easy: the lucid and colorful prose, packed with exciting incidents, relating a profound psychological study, carries the reader along so smoothly that there is a danger that he may too quickly pass through pages which deserve and repay deep study. The publishers, however, in what they say about the author on the book's wrapper, do their best (or their worst) to make readers give this enchanting story the go-by. To be solemnly assured, as one picks up a stout volume purporting to be a historical novel of the middle ages, that its author is "an assistant professor of English at the University of Wisconsin," and that "as a Guggenheim fellow she has worked abroad at the

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British Museum and the Bodleian Library . . . and has traveled in Italy," and that "she has already published two distinguished critical studies in the general field of mystical literature," is enough to discourage or even dismay those who do not expect learned lady professors to provide such exciting and authentic fiction as does Miss White.

It is true that woven into the fabric of this gorgeous tapestry of mediaeval life there is a sound and solid background of not only the secular and church history of the age—indeed, the two aspects were in that age one thing—but also the student seriously interested in the epical struggle between the "spirituals" and the followers of Elias, in the Franciscan Order, and of the deep springs of mystical theology, will find Miss White's story full of enlightenment and instruction. But the great fact about the story is that first and last and all the time it is a story. Jacopone da Todi is not a mere name taken from the annals of Franciscanism and attached to a dummy figure in an edifying tale, which is usually what happens in religious historical novels; Jacopone da Todi lives in this novel with a created life breathed into his amazing story by a true artist.

The Catholic Book Club has again rung the bell that was heard so gladly when it gave its cachet of approval to William Walsh's "Isabella of Spain," for once more it has given its subscribers a first-class work by an American author. But Miss White's book is more desirable an achievement than even Mr. Walsh's fine biography, for it is a true work of invention; it is a story that belongs in the very first rank of historical novels written by contemporary authors. It is, in fact, exuberantly written—perhaps even a bit redundantly; it could have been cut to advantage; but such luxuriance of language is only a proof of great vitality and of the absorbed interest of the writer in her own story, and none of it is mere padding.

The psychological interest of the transformation of a thoroughly worldly yet respectable man (although a poet at heart) into a saint—a task that even the angels must consider more difficult than the conversion of a passionate sinner—is the novel's special triumph. It is as modern as Freud, yet as ancient as the primitive confessional. And the poetry innate in the tale, as in its protagonist, chants now like dim Gregorian music, now like rousing tavern lilts, throughout the pages, as unerringly as the psychology is suggested—never obtrusively, nor didactically; but simply, and naturally, and without ostentation. I confidently and joyously announce a big literary event in the appearance of this novel, and prophesy without fear of confusion a great career for its author.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS.

Ideas

Moral Man and Immoral Society. A Study in Ethics and Politics, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.00.

IF THIS book could fulfil the promise of its publishers it would sell millions. The jacket says: "People are complaining about there being no leadership, no ideas, to help us out of our present despair. There are ideas. They are in this book. They are very important." As to Professor Niebuhr's fitness to lead: "He is an editor of the *World Tomorrow*, a contributing editor of the *Christian Century*, a professor at the Union Theological Seminary, and the author of three books. . . . Of his generation he is the most sought-after and influential speaker to students."

But the "ideas" here offered seem like those of a blind leader of the blind. I quote his final paragraphs: ". . . All the high-

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NEXT WEEK

ADDRESS TO AMERICANS, by Edouard Herriot, the brave Premier of France who went down to defeat in his fight against his countrymen's defaulting of their debt to the United States, explains the reason for the tidal wave of public opinion against payment in France, the events leading up to a tragedy in international relations. He ends on the note that a spirit of reconciliation in international arrangements may yet be achieved. In view of his coming visit, this is important. . . . THE TEMPTERS, by John Moody, president of Moody's Investors Service, one of the best known and most respected firms dealing in financial analysis in the United States, continues his absorbing story of the man at grips with the stern realities of a career built around Wall Street who yet has a keen longing for spiritual values, for a higher type of life than one confined narrowly to the getting and spending of large sums of money. As anyone who reads Mr. Moody's story in the present issue of THE COMMONWEAL will appreciate, this is a fascinating human document. . . . THE HOME AND CRIME, by the Reverend John P. McCaffrey, chaplain of Sing Sing Prison, gives the matured opinions of a man in a unique position to speak on criminality with authority. . . . CLASSICISM AND BANKRUPTCY, by Craig Ladrière, talks of saving literature from bankruptcy. . . . IMPROVING GREGORIAN CHANT, by the Reverend Ludwig Bonvin, S.J., suggests several reasons why this sort of music leaves so many people cold and how it could be made, not only more acceptable, but also more like it was when it was originally composed and sung.

est ideals and tenderest emotions which men have felt all through the ages, when they became fully conscious of their heritage and possible destiny as human beings . . . appear as a luxury which only those are able to indulge who are comfortable enough to be comparatively oblivious to the desperate character of our contemporary social situation. We live in an age in which personal moral idealism is easily accused of hypocrisy and frequently deserves it. It is an age in which honesty is possible only when it skirts the edges of cynicism. All this is rather tragic. For what the individual conscience feels . . . is not a luxury but a necessity of the soul. Yet there is beauty in our tragedy. We are, at least, rid of some of our illusions. We can no longer buy the highest satisfactions of the individual life at the expense of social injustice. We cannot build our individual ladders to heaven and leave the total human enterprise unredeemed of its excesses and corruptions.

"In the task of that redemption the most effective agents will be men who have *substituted some new illusions for the abandoned ones* [italics mine]. The most important of these illusions is that the collective life of mankind can achieve perfect justice. It is a very valuable illusion for the moment; for justice cannot be approximated if the hope of its perfect realization does not generate a sublime madness in the soul. Nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant power and 'spiritual wickedness in high places.' The illusion is dangerous because it encourages terrible fanaticisms. It must therefore be brought under the control of reason. One can only hope that reason will not destroy it before its work is done."

Can men hope to "redeem the total human enterprise" by "substituting new illusions" for the regenerating truths concerning God, by faith and power of which corrupted pagans and untamed barbarians were changed into God-fearing and God-loving builders of His houses? Is it not reasonable to assume that by returning to those life-imparting ways which, now as ever, prove their power to "save" the individual who can believe the Word of Christ sufficiently to try, himself, to put faith into practice, we might find "social justice" coming about in fulness of God's love, poured out through men, on those they serve and save for Christ's dear sake? The "economic pressure" which makes men today think this to be impossible for them to do themselves is a natural result of having taught them to do in cut-throat competition with each other what offers them a money profit—rather than what serves life. Heaven knows it will require heroic leaders to destroy the great delusion of an individual impotence to do what "conscience" dictates without human guarantee of "visible support." But when such souls appear they will not lack for followers. The battle won't be won by virtue of "illusions"; but by eternal power of the deathless Truth that if one can believe, all things seem possible to the believer, who puts his trust in God revealed in Christ.

MARGARET KENDALL.

A Modern Purgatorio

Sweeney Agonistes. Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama, by T. S. Eliot. London: Faber and Faber. 2/6.

THE QUOTATION from Saint John of the Cross which Mr. Eliot prefixes to his latest book of verse goes farther than the hint of parody in his title or the apologetic compromise of his sub-title to explain his motive in republishing these two desultory fragments of satire from the *Criterion*. "Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, until it has divested itself of the love of created beings." Mr. Eliot's portrayal of "created beings" has in the past been sufficiently scath-

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ing; its purpose must be understood by anyone who wishes to grasp the nature and process of his spiritual experience. In the desolation and vacuity of "A Cooking Egg," "The Hippopotamus," "Gerontion," "Prufrock" and "The Waste Land," he achieved that ruthless notation of reality without mastering which no knowledge of material fact may be gained and no renunciation of it justified. These were records of a self-scrutiny bordering on spiritual masochism. They explored with an ironic intensity unknown to most of Mr. Eliot's contemporaries the material ambition and depravity of his time. They found their climax in the empty monotony of "The Hollow Men" and their justification in the regenerative impulse of "Ash Wednesday." It is difficult to see how his new long poem (of which two sections have already appeared: "Triumphal March" and "Difficulties of a Statesman") or the present operatic burlesque improves on the earlier presentation, or, indeed, justifies a repetition of what has already found its logical place in a remarkable personal and historical record.

The method of Eliot remains his own; his imitators cannot dispute that fact. A poet should also be granted his diversions. These facts do not, however, improve the dulness which "Sweeney Agonistes" offers in fully twenty of its thirty pages. The Aristophanic element is hardly authentic enough to enliven a kind of satire already overexploited in recent years, whereas the use of "jazz as a medium for tragedy" attributed to these fragments by one critic is not only a dubious venture, but a venture at which Mr. Eliot, despite his mastery of topical accents and banality, has not conspicuously succeeded. The fact that he has already depicted that tragedy in classic terms renders this book a tactical error to any reader who has followed him into the beautiful and profound passages of "Ash Wednesday."

There is one purpose which may justify these poems, however. Most modern readers require a great quantity of repetition before an effect is achieved in their minds. If Mr. Eliot still thinks it possible to reach this audience, there can be no question that even an obtuse reader will leave these pages without admitting the emptiness, tedium and depravity of the elements in contemporary life which they describe. The renunciation of "the love of created beings" is not only a painful process, but a slow one. Since the evidence guaranteeing Mr. Eliot's sincerity exists, he should doubtless be allowed not only the amusement but the thoroughness by which he will achieve that spiritual triumph. To those who cannot accept the sterile horrors here presented, he offers another quotation, this time from the "Oresteia": "You don't see them, you don't—but *I* see them: they are hunting me down, I must move on." The last phrase here contains, of course, one of the most important declarations in modern poetry.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL.

When the Drums Played

Revolution: 1776, by John Hyde Preston. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.90.

IT IS seldom that we get history served us in so breezy, intimate and gossipy a form as it is served in Mr. Preston's description of the salient events and outstanding personages of the American Revolution. There is nothing really revolutionary in this revolutionary history, yet the author retells the story of the great struggle with a unique charm of style that gives it its readable quality. He uses the vernacular of the day without sacrificing dignity. Rather it helps to give his account life and breath, the graphic touch of an artist confident of his skill. He hails the Washington that has now emerged stripped of his

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church-window saintliness, who swore like a pirate at the battle of Monmouth, as supposedly he did in other battles, and who has become dearer to the rank and file of the American people for his human attributes, though possibly he did chop down cherry trees with his little hatchet.

The author has gone pretty conscientiously about his work, with little tolerance for the superficialities of historians who give six different accounts of weather conditions pertaining to the same important incident. His portraitures of Washington, Green, Lafayette, Steuben and other leaders are vigorous, lively and richly anecdotal. Witness his account of an American retreat covered by a New York battery "commanded by a nineteen-year-old captain who had reddish-brown hair, deep-set violet eyes, a crag-like brow, an abnormally thin chest, long spindly arms and legs, and a charming smile. He was the illegitimate son of a beautiful French Jewess by a drunken Scotch pedler, and his name was Alexander Hamilton.

Here and there he injects drama into his narrative by giving an event or a scene the verisimilitude of life, as though he had actually overheard the dialogue of the actors, as by way of quoting the German used by the Hessians when surprised at their bacchanal at Trenton. His manner of dealing with Burgoyne and his surrender is fascinating for its details, and the surrender of Cornwallis is well and elaborately described. Almost every page is alive with action, and there is less of diplomatic manœuvers than of military clashes, marches and intrigues, told in a way to warm the heart of the non-pacifist, though perhaps affording less satisfaction to the student of the political strategy involved in the achievement of our independence. The work is well documented. It has a fourteen-page closely printed bibliography and a good index.

FREDERICK F. SCHRADER.

Adventure

Crossroads, by Joseph Kessel; translated by William Almon Wolff. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.50.

WE HAVE all too few adventure stories, and we need them. Books like "Crossroads" answer the craving.

Three men stalk across its pages, each utterly different from the others. The first is Igricheff, son of a Russian nobleman and a Turkestan mother. Vaguely Mohammedan, absolutely fatalistic, he lives life to the hilt, a cruel animal certain of himself, indifferent to others, careless of this life and the next. He first turns up at Sana, capital of the Yemen, in the midst of the Arabian desert in the year 1929. Thereafter he swashbuckles through fight after fight, escaping finally from his enemies to a boat leaving the Arabian shore. On this boat is a Frenchman, Mordham, who years before left Europe to make his fortune in the Near East but never found it. On land he would be no match for Igricheff, but on the sea he is his master, as he proves when he brings his creaky craft victorious through a tropic storm. Mordham has on his ship another Frenchman, a young millionaire adventure-bent. Landed on the east coast of Africa this youth, Philippe, a weakling in comparison to Igricheff and Mordham, proves himself the kind of man the former could not comprehend and the latter could never become, and while Philippe loses his life and the others preserve theirs, he nevertheless finds it.

The author's treatment of his subject is exceptional. Philippe and Mordham and Igricheff promise to remain with D'Artagnan and Huckleberry Finn and Scaramouche as never-to-be-forgotten figures of fiction.

STUART D. GOULDING.

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Briefer Mention

The French Cathedrals: Their Symbolic Significance, by Hélène Fouré. Boston: Bruce Humphries. $2.50.

THIS little book "sums up" talks given by a French lady who, "when acting as interpreter with the armies in Picardy, was asked by the British authorities to lecture in Amiens Cathedral." She found her auditors so interested in hearing from her the significance of mediaeval imagery in glass and stone, she naturally hopes the publication of these talks "will encourage English-speaking people to study, therefore to love, that most magnificent and perfect work of art: the French cathedral." Unfortunately, while it is clear that standing in a great church, surrounded by carved saints and symbols illustrating everything she said, Mme. Fouré would have awakened just the spirit she desired to rouse, she takes for granted knowledge on the part of those addressed which no uncultured reader commands. And the book lacks even a short glossary of architectural terms like ogive, tympanum, triforium. Desire to know is roused: but as regards its satisfaction, the fare provided seems to be served without sufficiency of solid nutriment, and in an overcostly form. A student rarely can afford to spend so much on mere *hors d'oeuvre,* however whetting to the appetite. The book would have a wider usefulness as slight accompaniment to an art course.

Ordination Anointings in the Western Church before 1000 A. D., by Gerald Ellard, S.J. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mediaeval Academy of America. $3.50.

FATHER ELLARD'S book is a dissertation prepared under the aegis of the University of Munich, with all the solidity and thoroughness of Teutonic scholarship. It is also proof of the author's marked aptitude for liturgical study and teaching. One is therefore genuinely proud that such a book should have been written by a professor in an American Catholic University. To review it here at length is impossible. Father Ellard's purpose is to weigh theories concerning the origin of the use of anointing as part of the ordination ritual, and then to establish his own conclusions on the basis of available manuscript evidence. The original Roman ordination ceremony was spare and limited to the laying on of hands and prayer. Elaboration of this formula first took place in Gaul, possibly by reason, in part, of Celtic influences. Father Ellard traces the development to Rome itself, during the three centuries preceding the death of Pope Sylvester II. Of great value are the numerous and dependable references to manuscript sources.

Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy, by Charles S. Macfarland. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.75.

DR. MACFARLAND holds that Church Union is an ideal which is finding practical fulfilment in Protestant federations on a national basis. He believes that the papal encyclical published at the time of the Lausanne Conference (1927) renders it out of the question to consider further any patching up of Protestant differences with Rome. "Surely it may now be hoped," he writes, "that men who have delayed the unity of non-Catholic Christians by this hope of Roman inclusion will no longer persist in continuing an obstructive course." On the other hand, he looks for more enlightened coöperation between Catholic and Protestant groups in the realm of social action. We are inclined to think that Dr. Macfarland is right. But in this difficult matter it is not argument that counts but prayer.

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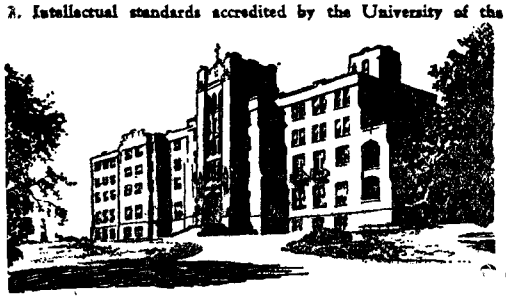

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Economics and Politics, by Moritz Julius Bonn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $1.00.

WHILE in this country, Professor Bonn delivered th above-named lecture, in which he examines primarily the fami iar contention that the history of the last thirteen years prove the superiority of business over politics. The form in which this statement usually appears is: business men have a lot of sense and energy, but politicians are sleepy, corrupt, doddering idiots. The eminent German authority evidently enjoyed ripping this bit of fiction to pieces. He concludes by saying: "Our objective must be a state of affairs where economics—the work of the business man as well as of the laborers—are protected against unwise and unfair political intervention, and where politics are kept free from sectional economic domination entailing impersonal corruption or group exploitation." All of which makes this an interesting little book.

Caravan Cities, by M. Rostovtzeff; translated by D. and T. Talbot Rice. New York: Oxford University Press. $4.50.

PROFESSOR ROSTOVTZEFF is probably as well acquainted with "Transjordania" as any man now living. He has known the region under varying conditions and at different times. But in the present book he has not abused his authority. It is a clear, well-written study of the desert cities (Petra, Jerash, Palmyra, Dura), which elucidates the theory that the economic substructure of all was based upon caravan trade moving from the East to the West. The book is fully aware of recent discoveries, but is essentially original and fresh. Many illustrations help the reader to visualize the scenes described. In short, here is another valuable title for the student of the Near East.

The Creation of the Human Soul, by William Reany, D.D. New York: Benziger Brothers. $1.75.

FATHER REANY'S treatise is a defense, in scholastic form, of the traditional Catholic view of the soul and an exposition of differing views on mooted points. Creationism is set forth as being the only tenable doctrine, while emanationism and traducianism are repudiated. The author inclines to favor the Thomistic-Aristotelian view that the moment of infusion occurs some time after conception. It must be remembered that such problems can never be settled scientifically, since we must remain without data. The solutions are those dictated by one's view of life, but it suffices that the Catholic attitude is plausible rather than *contra rationem.*

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